

AND

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Actor
Ben Stiller

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Detained leader allegedly behind deadly car bombings in Baghdad

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Early favorites to meet in Jacksonville

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AP photos

Above: Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb is greeted by a sidelined Terrell Owens after Dorsey Levens ran for a touchdown in the first quarter against the Falcons in the NFC championship game on Sunday. Left: Patriots coach Bill Belichick is hugged by quarterback Tom Brady after New England advanced to the Super Bowl for the third time in four years with a 41-27 win over the Steelers in the AFC championship.

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Clergy sex trial: The winter storm that pounded the Northeast prompted Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney to keep some nonessential state workers home Monday, including employees at the courthouse where a high-profile clergy sex abuse case was to begin.

Romney's announcement meant that opening statements in the trial of defrocked priest Paul Shanley, one of the highest-profile figures to go to trial in the Roman Catholic clergy sex abuse scandal, would not begin in Middlesex Superior Court until Tuesday. A jury was seated last week.

Gay marriage ban: Senate supporters of a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage said Monday they intend to press for passage in the new Congress, brushing aside mixed signals from the White House on the issue's importance at the start of President Bush's second term.

"Who's to say whether we have enough votes or not," said Sen. Wayne Allard, R-Colo., noting that the new two-year Congress has just begun.

He said he expects GOP leaders to call for a vote before the 2006 elections and added, "I think it would be foolhardy to back off when we've got a good head of steam coming out of the election." The amendment fell far short of passage a year ago.

Military

Aircraft lawsuit: The families of five Florida National Guardsmen killed when their transport plane crashed in Georgia four years ago settled their lawsuit Monday against the aircraft's manufacturers.

The families will receive \$3.75 million from the companies that made and maintained the C-23B+ Sherpa cargo plane and its parts: Montreal-based Bombardier Inc. and its subsidiary, plane maker Short Brothers PLC, Dunstable Aviation Inc. of Lincoln, Neb., and Rockwell International of Milwaukee and its former subsidiary Rockwell Collins Inc. of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

The March 2001 crash killed 21 Guardsmen.

World

Vioxx death report: A London medical journal published a study Tuesday of deaths related to the anti-inflammatory drug Vioxx after withholding the report because the researcher said he had been threatened by supervisors at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.



Sudan visit: An adult and child sit outside a shelter Thursday in a camp for refugees in Rumbek, Sudan. U.S. lawmakers who met with Darfur rebels in western Sudan and visited camps for Sudanese refugees in Chad over the weekend said they will ask Washington to push for U.N. sanctions against the Sudanese government. The lawmakers will also seek a larger African Union peacekeeping force in Darfur, a congressional staff member said on the condition of anonymity.

The Lancet, which originally planned to publish the paper on Nov. 17, released the study online.

Dr. David Graham, who works in the FDA's office of drug safety, has said he was firmly discouraged from publishing his data questioning the safety of Vioxx, which was withdrawn from the market in September.

Kashmir cease-fire: Pakistan on Monday accused India of violating a cease-fire at the heavily militarized border in disputed Kashmir but maintained that the 14-month truce between the nuclear armed rivals is still in place.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Masood Khan said that senior military officials of the two sides are in "frequent contact," and "both sides have renewed assurances that cease-fire would be observed by Pakistan and India." A cease-fire took effect in November 2003 and is a keystone in a still-fragile peace process aimed at resolving five decades of enmity between the two countries, which have fought three wars since 1947, two of them over Kashmir.

Bird flu pandemic: World Health Organization members struggled Monday to find common ground on how countries should tackle any future influenza pandemic, especially a potential human variant of deadly bird flu.

A session of the 32-nation WHO executive board in Geneva was bogged down on the issue of whether countries hit by a massive outbreak could override patents on anti-flu drugs, and the meeting was halted to let delegates get their governments for guidance.

WWII sex slaves: A private fund used to compensate women forced into World War II brothels run by the Japanese army will be dissolved in March 2007, officials said Monday in Tokyo.

Critics decried the decision, saying it re-

flected Japan's refusal to take responsibility for the former sex slaves, known as "comfort women."

Former Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, the president of the Asian Women's Fund, said in a statement it will finish ongoing projects by March 2007, and would be dissolved as of March 31 that year.

The fund — created by the government in 1995 but independently operated with private donations — has provided a way for Japan to extend aid to former sex slaves without the money coming in the form of official government compensation.

Zhao's death: Chinese authorities and Zhao Ziyang's family couldn't agree Monday on when the ousted Communist Party leader's final resting place will be following his death last week, an activist who was in contact with the family said.

At issue was whether Zhao's ashes would be allowed to rest in a room for deceased state leaders at the Baboshan Cemetery, the main burial site for China's revolutionary heroes, said Hong Kong-based activist Frank Lui in a faxed statement.

Zhao was forced from power in 1989 after sympathizing with the Tiananmen Square pro-democracy protesters and spent his last 15 years under house arrest.

War on terrorism

British detainees at Gitter: British Muslim leaders lobbied the government Monday to give medical treatment and counseling to four Britons expected to return home this week from the U.S. base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where they were held for more than three years.

The Muslim Council of Britain said the four, some of whom claim they were tortured, would be heavily traumatized and in need of care.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

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USAF, Navy might turn away recruits

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — While the Army and the Marine Corps are straining to meet recruiting goals, the Air Force and the Navy may wind up turning away thousands of potential recruits, according to a report in USA Today.

The Air Force told the paper it has a backlog of about 9,000 enlistees who have not yet been called to duty. It has slashed its 2005 recruiting target from 35,000 to 24,000. Together, the Air Force and Navy say they are planning to reduce the total number of troops by more than 27,000 in 2005, USA Today reported.

In contrast, the Army and the Marine Corps, which are providing the bulk of ground troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, are adding more than 12,000 troops this year.

One of the primary reasons the Air Force and the Navy are so flush with troops and willing recruits, personnel experts say, is that those branches have suffered relatively few casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"I think the most obvious explanation is that you're less likely to be killed or wounded in the Navy or Air Force," Richard Kohn, a professor at the University of North Carolina who studies military culture, told the paper.

Of the more than 1,350 U.S. deaths during the Iraq war, 41 have come from the Air Force and the Navy, according to a Defense Department breakdown.

Both the Marines and the Army say they expect to meet their recruiting goals this year, but acknowledge it will be difficult, USA Today reported.



JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

PAWS President Sabrina Leuthold and cat Mikan inspect the handwork of LIFE TEEN and EDGE, Misawa youth groups that painted some of the walls and a door at the Pets Are Worth Saving building last weekend.

Misawa teens spruce up pet rescue facility

Stars and Stripes

MISAWA AIR BASE, Japan — Pets Are Worth Saving received a much-needed face lift from a group of student volunteers Saturday.

The base's Catholic youth groups — called LIFE TEEN, for high school students, and EDGE, for middle-schoolers — fixed up the aging PAWS building with some coats of paint and colorful artwork.

"They really did a good job," said PAWS president Sabrina Leuthold. "They painted the inside and outside of our front door, they painted our hallway and they painted in one room. They did a lot of cleaning and they played with the animals."

In one stray-animal room, the

students painted Mount Fuji with a blue-sky background and a paw print on top.

Robin Moseley, the groups' youth minister, said the students are taking on more community projects.

"We're trying to stress with our teens that we want to activate our faith, really bring our faith to life in normal, daily activities and do service to others," she said.

From 20 to 30 students helped spruce up PAWS on Saturday, Leuthold said. It's housed in a former dental office in one of the older buildings on base, she said.

Currently available for adoption at PAWS are four cats and two red slider turtles that "don't bite," according to Leuthold.

Call PAWS at DSN 222-7002 for more information.



MATTHEW R. SCHWARTZ/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Petty Officer 2nd Class Joseph Dominguez salutes as, from right, Petty Officer 3rd Class Christopher Rainey, Seaman Heather Sadler and a Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force member lower the American and Japanese flags at Iwo Jima Air Base on Saturday. Members of U.S. Naval Air Facility Atsugi's Security Department provided support to Carrier Air Wing 5 during the night-landing training on the island.

Night landing practice wraps up

Stars and Stripes

Navy planes completed night landing practice at Iwo Jima and Atsugi Naval Air Facility this weekend, Navy officials said.

Atsugi NAF spokesman Brian Narango said the jets were due back from Iwo Jima on Monday afternoon. The practice started Jan. 18.

"The training went off without a hitch and we're glad it was once again a successful evolution," he said.

The pilots did not use the alternate landing sites of Yokota and Misawa air bases and Iwakuni Marine Corps Air Station. Those bases can be utilized in the event of bad weather.

Though Atsugi receives the quieter propeller jets during the training, such as the E-2 Hawkeye, at least a handful of Atsugi city residents submitted noise complaints.

"On one day there were 18," said Commander Naval Forces Japan spokesman Jon Nylander.

He said he did not know the number of complaints for the other days.

Navy pilots practice night landings to become qualified for car-



JOSHUA C. MILLAGE/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Pilots from Strike Fighter Squadron 102 watch signals from a ground crewman as they taxi in from conducting "touch and goes," simulations of the same landings they will make on an aircraft carrier.

rier landings at sea.

Nylander said there's been no word whether the Kitty Hawk will be needed to assist with tsunami relief.

Chief Petty Officer Rick Cher-

nitzer, a 7th Fleet spokesman, said the Kitty Hawk, which recently completed sea trials after a refurbishment period, has "not received any tasking to do it this time."



Petty Officer 2nd Class Dale Doyle watches the movements of aircraft on the radar as USS Kitty Hawk pilots make their carrier-landing qualifications. Selected squadrons from the air wing conducted training at Iwo Jima Air Base Jan. 17-24.

JOSHUA C. MILLAGE
Courtesy of the
U.S. Navy

Iraqi forces arrest al-Zarqawi's top aide

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Iraqi security forces have arrested the "most lethal" top lieutenant of al-Qaida's leader in Iraq — a man alleged to be behind most of the car bombings in Baghdad since the U.S.-led invasion, including the 2003 assault on U.N. headquarters that killed 22 people, the prime minister's office said Monday.

Sami Mohammed Ali Said al-Jaaf, also known as Abu Omar al-Kurdi, was arrested during a Jan. 15 raid in Baghdad, a government statement said Monday. Two other militants linked to Jordanian-born

Suspect allegedly responsible for most of the Baghdad car bombings since invasion

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's terror group also were arrested, authorities announced Monday.

Al-Zarqawi heads al-Qaida in Iraq, the terror network's local affiliate. The group is behind many of the car bombings, beheadings, assassinations and other attacks driving the insurgency in Iraq. The suspect was linked to the August 2003 bombing of U.N. headquarters in Baghdad

Baghdad, which killed the top U.N. envoy in Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello, and 21 others. The U.N. attack was "planned and directed by two others affiliated with Abu Omar," the statement said.

Al-Jaaf was responsible for 32 car bombing attacks that killed hundreds of Iraqis, the statement said. Al-Jaaf "confessed to building approximately 75 percent of the car bombs used in attacks in Baghdad

since March 2003," said Thaeir al-Naqib, spokesman for interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi.

Abu Omar al-Kurdi claims responsibility for some of the most ruthless attacks on Iraqi police forces and police stations," al-Naqib said.

The suspect built the car bomb used to attack a shrine in the Shiite holy city of Najaf that killed more than 85 people, including Ayatollah Mohammad Baqir al-Hakim, in August 2003.

He also assembled the car bomb used to assassinate Izzat al-Saleem, president of the now-defunct Iraqi Governing Council in May, the statement said.

Suicide car bomber strikes outside Allawi HQ in Iraq

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — A suicide driver detonated a car bomb outside the prime minister's party headquarters Monday, injuring 10 people in a blast claimed by the al-Qaida affiliate in Iraq.

The suicide bomber struck at a police checkpoint on the road leading to Prime Minister Ayad Allawi's Iraqi National Accord offices in central Baghdad, shaking the city center with a thunderous explosion. The wounded included eight policemen and two civilians, said Dr. Mudhar Abdul-Hussein of Yarmouk Hospital.

Al-Qaida's wing in Iraq said in a Web posting that "one of the young lions in the suicide regiment" carried out the attack against the party office of Allawi, "the agent of the Jews and the Christians."

The attacks occurred six days before Iraq's crucial national elections, the first since the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003.

Insurgents have condemned the elections and vowed to disrupt them.

In an audiotape posted Sunday on the Web, a speaker claiming to be Abu Musab al-Zarqawi declared "force war" on democracy and said anyone who takes part in next weekend's Iraqi elections would be considered "an infidel."

"We have declared a fierce war on this evil principle of democracy and those who follow this wrong ideology," the speaker said. "Anyone who tries to help set up this system is part of it."

The speaker warned Iraqis to be careful of "the enemy's plan to implement so-called democracy in your country." He said the Americans have engineered the election to install Shiite Muslims in power. Al-Zarqawi, who is a Sunni Arab like most of the insurgents here, has in the past branded Shiites as heretics.

The authenticity of the tape could not immediately be verified.

The Jordanian-born al-Zarqawi heads al-Qaida in Iraq, the terror network's local affiliate. The group is behind many of the car bombings, beheadings, assassinations and other attacks driving the insurgency in Iraq.

The United States has offered a

\$25 million reward for al-Zarqawi's capture or death — the same amount as for al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden.

In the elections, voters are to choose a 275-member National Assembly and legislatures in each of the 18 provinces. Voters in the Kurdish-rich area of the north will also elect a new regional parliament.

American and Iraqi officials have warned they expect rebels to unleash bloodshed and mayhem to keep voters from the polls in what supporters are advertising as the first free election in this country since the overthrow of Iraq's monarchy in 1958.

In other news, an Arab political faction has pulled out of this weekend's general elections because Kurds deported by Saddam Hussein from Kirkuk were given the

right to vote in the city, the leader of the group said Monday.

Wasfi Assi Hassan al-Obaidi said his 24-member United Arab Front decided to withdraw because "we are not happy about allowing deported Kurds to register and vote in Kirkuk."

In Afghanistan, President Hamid Karzai urged Iraqis to follow the example of Afghan citizens in turning out for landmark elections despite the threat of violence, saying their votes would help their country toward prosperity.

"The Iraqi people must not fear terrorists. Instead, they should make their elections a success with bravery and courage ... they must endeavor to ensure the rule of democracy and the right to elect their leader," Karzai said in a statement.

Violence continued in Iraq, with three U.S. soldiers wounded Sunday, including one seriously, in a mortar attack in Samarra north of Baghdad, the U.S. command said.

On Sunday night, insurgents blew up three schools to be used as polling centers in Tikrit.

Gunmen firing from a speeding car shot dead an Iraqi police lieutenant as he was returning home Sunday night in Baghdad, an Interior Ministry official said. North of the capital, the deputy governor of Iraq's Diyala province, Ghassan al-Khadran, escaped an assassination attempt Monday morning as a roadside bomb struck his car.

On Monday, mortar rounds slammed into an Iraqi National Guard camp near Baghdad International Airport as the rumble of

disputed explosions reverberated through the capital. There was no report of casualties.

Monday's blast in Baghdad rattled buildings along the Tigris River in the center of the city and sent black smoke rising above the skyline. U.S. military helicopters cut through overcast skies above the scene.

Police fired on the car as it sped toward them, killing the driver as the blast ripped the vehicle apart, said an Interior Ministry official.

Splintered police vehicles were engulfed in flames, and gunfire rattled after the explosion.

In addition, Khalil al-Duleimi, one of 25 attorneys representing Saddam, told other lawyers on the team that he has received death threats following his Dec. 16 meeting with the ousted Iraqi leader, according to chief defense attorney Ziad al-Khasnawneh.



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Elections report is GI's Time to shine

BY LESLIE HOFFMAN

The Associated Press

RIO RANCHO, N.M. — Time magazine's special report on Iraq's upcoming elections brings the war closer to home for Carol and Samuel Lujan. The cover captures a stoic image of a young New Mexico soldier — the first glimpse of their son since his deployment to the Middle East last January.

The photo, featured on a special Jan. 31 issue, shows a helmet-clad Pfc. Christopher Lujan and his fellow troops on foot patrol in the streets of Mosul.

Lujan's family is one of many military families waiting — and watching — amid vows by rebels to disrupt balloting in this week-end's vote. U.S. and Iraqi officials fear more attacks in the run-up to Sunday's election and plan massive security measures.

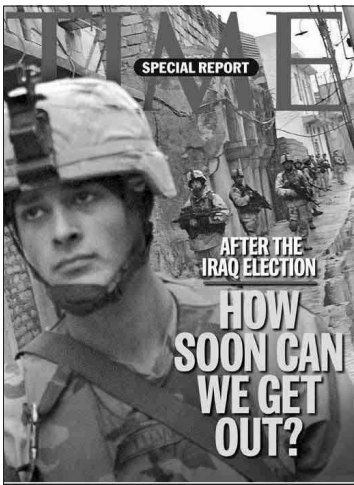
Lujan's parents learned over the weekend that their son would be on the Time cover. The issue was due to hit newsstands Monday.

When Lujan's commander called the soldier's father, he also said Lujan was returning to the States next month. They welcomed the news, since Lujan had told his family he likely would not be back until April.

"As a father it makes me feel great that he's leaving," said Samuel Lujan, who had a 21-year career in the Army. "I'm very happy that he's rotating out with the way things are getting now. And with the elections, I'm sure that it will get even uglier."

In Iraq, Christopher has "been on the move," his mother said, one of the many U.S. soldiers on regular patrols.

A member of the Army's 25th Infantry Division, Lujan enlisted in December 2002. He dreamed of becoming a pilot and wanted to



TIME MAGAZINE/AP

In this handout provided by Time magazine, Pfc. Christopher Lujan, of Rio Rancho, N.M., is shown on the cover of the Jan. 31 issue on patrol in Mosul, Iraq.

start a military career as an officer but a slip in his senior year grades prevented that, his mother said.

Mosul is among the areas where troops have stepped up security operations, rounding up hundreds of suspected insurgents. On Saturday, a U.S. soldier was killed on a security patrol there.

It's the kind of news that makes the wait until next month all that more difficult for Lujan's family.

"It just brings me to tears every time the topic [of the war] comes up for more than five minutes," Carol Lujan said.

"I'm very happy that he's rotating out with the way things are getting now."

Samuel Lujan

Father of Pfc. Christopher Lujan, who is serving in Iraq and is on the cover of the Jan. 31 issue of Time magazine

sue bombers," she said.

"I don't believe they want us there ... I am fearful. I can barely stand to watch the television."

Shiite vow. Win won't make Iraq an Islamic state

BY BASSEM MROUE

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Leaders of the mostly Shiite Muslim ticket said Monday they have no intention of establishing an Iranian-style Islamic state in Iraq if they sweep next weekend's national elections.

They also vowed not to be dragged into a civil war by retaliating against Sunni extremist attacks on the Shiite community but called Sunni clerics to condemn violence.

The comments were made by top figures of the 228-member United Iraqi Alliance list, which is backed by the country's top Shiite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani. The ticket is widely expected to fare best in Sunday's elections which many Sunni Arabs are expected to boycott.

The list is headed by a cleric, Abdel-Aziz al-Hakim, leader of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, the country's largest political group. Nevertheless, key figures on the list reported they do not foresee clerical rule in Iraq.

"No, no," insisted Education Minister Sami Mudafhar when asked about clerical rule. "I don't think so."

He noted that the list includes secular-minded candidates and "each individual on the list has his own ideas which differ from [the others]."

Human Hamoudi, a senior SCIRI official and a cleric, said the list has many members, including some of the top 10, who are liberal secularists who do not believe in mixing Islam and politics.

"Had this been our intention we wouldn't have let them join our list," he said.

Hanin Mohammed Qaddou, a Sunni Muslim from Mosul who is



Abdel-Aziz al-Hakim

running on the list, said the issue "of a religious government was not part of the [list's] program and it will not be in the near future."

As the elections draw near, attacks on Shiite Muslims have increased in what appears to be an attempt by Sunni Arab insurgents to scare Shiites from voting. On Friday, a Shiite mosque was targeted with a car bomb, killing 14 and wounding 40. Later that day, a suicide attacker driving an ambulance detonated his vehicle at a Shiite wedding south of Baghdad. At least seven people died.

Still, Shiite candidates said they would not respond to the attacks in kind.

"We believe that we have no justifications, whether religious or political, to escalate the situation and enter into the civil war quagmire because it means the Balkanization of Iraq or the Lebanonization of Iraq," said Khudayer al-Khuzai of the Islamic Dawia Party-Iraq.

"Continuing to be patient is better for us, for Iraq and for Iraqis than entering a civil war that will be destructive," he said.

In an on-line posted Sunday on an Internet Web site, a speaker claiming to be Iraq's most feared militant, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, said the Americans have engineered the election to install Shiite Muslims in power. Al-Zarqawi, who is a Sunni Arab like most of the insurgents here, has in the past branded Shiites as heretics.

Asked about al-Zarqawi's statement, Hamoudi, the SCIRI official, said "al-Zarqawi is not worth a response because he is a terrorist who kills innocent people and is proud of killing innocent civilians."

Hamoudi urged Sunni religious scholars and Iraqi and Arab Sunni personalities to speak out against violent acts by insurgents.

"What is needed from us is patience and what is needed from them is a clear stance in condemning these operations and declaring them un-Islamic," he said.

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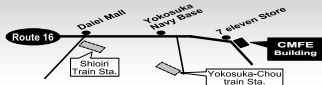


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2 Corinthians 3:17

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IN THE WORLD



AP photos

Left: Mustafa Kamal bursts into tears as he is reunited with his daughter, Rina Augustina, 5, after being separated for nearly a month in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. Rina was cared for by a family she didn't know after the Dec. 26 tsunami separated her from her two sisters as they were swept away outside their house. Her mother remains missing. Above: Villagers burn refuse from the tsunami, seen in this aerial photograph, along the western coast of Aceh, Indonesia.

Family reunited a month after tsunami

BY YEON EN-LAI
The Associated Press

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia — Truck driver Mustafa Kamal had dreams that his 5-year-old daughter survived the tsunami waves that smashed into Indonesia, and he spent the past four weeks searching for her in refugee camps. His persistence finally paid off Monday.

Kamal saw his girl's name on a list posted at the office of international aid group Save the Children. He screamed when he saw her and cried as he fell to his knees to hug his daughter, Rina Augustina, dressed in a lime green shirt and checkered pants. "By the grace of God I knew you were alive! I knew it!" Kamal screamed as they embraced in Banda Aceh, the provincial capital of tsunami-ravaged Aceh on the northern tip of Sumatra island.

Rina grabbed her father and began crying. Between sobs, she asked where her father had been and demanded to see her mother, who's still missing.

The girl was cared for by a family she didn't know after the Dec. 26 tsunami separated her from

her family.

"Another family looking for their son told me they saw her name on the board, so I came here," Kamal said. "It came to me in a dream that she stayed alive."

The girl was the first to be reunited with her family under a Save the Children program that compiles lists of children's names and asks radio stations to broadcast the information, said the group's spokeswoman, Eileen Burke.

The local newspaper Serambi also has played a role in reuniting families. One ad in the paper shows 5-year-old Sherina Azahra with a teddy bear and describes her as wearing Mickey Mouse earrings and a gold chain emblazoned with the letter "S" when she went missing in Aceh.

Another depicts two missing brothers — Satria Mulia and Muhammad Farhan — in traditional Islamic robes with a phone number to call below their pictures.

"We thought the newspaper was our best option. Our last remaining resources are put in here," said Sri Muryani, mother of the two boys. "We have not put their

Survivors begin leaving refugee camps

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia — Tsunami survivors in Indonesia's shattered Aceh province have left relief camps by the tens of thousands in recent days to move in with relatives, a U.N. official said Monday.

Elsewhere in Indonesia, a powerful earthquake sent thousands of people scrambling for higher ground, fearful it would trigger a tsunami like the one that killed at least 160,000 in the Indian Ocean region last month, most in Aceh. Officials said there was no danger of killer waves.

Joel Boutroux, the head of the U.N. relief effort in Aceh, said the number of relief camps has dropped by 75 percent in the past week, from 385 to less than 100. The number of people in any one camp ranges from a few hundred to 2,000.

The "dramatic decrease" is good news because relief settlements can make survivors too dependent on outside help, keeping them from rebuilding their lives, Boutroux said. He said most of those leaving were moving in with relatives, though a few were returning to their villages along Aceh's devastated west coast.

The government is building temporary housing

for 100,000 survivors, along with mosques, schools and medical facilities. Some of the homes could be ready next week, enabling more survivors to move out of their tents.

Boutroux also said a survey found that 12.7 percent of tsunami survivors under 5 were malnourished, slightly higher than the national average of about 9 percent. Part of the reason was their diet lacked variety, he said.

He said many survivors received little more than rice and biscuits in the first weeks after the disaster. Now fish, salt and sugar are available, he said.

Boutroux praised the role of the Indonesia military in relief efforts but suggested that the operations should eventually be handed over to a civilian authorities.

"I believe there is a consensus on the need for the civilian authorities here to take full control of the operation," he said.

"We are in support of this process."

The military has heavy presence in the province, where separatists have been fighting for an independent homeland for nearly 30 years.

— The Associated Press

photo anywhere else, but we have been to camps looking for them. No one has told us where to go."

Over the radio, broadcasters

read out names of children living in camps across Aceh's capital.

All over the city, posters of the missing are displayed on street

lamps, refugee settlement areas, offices of various organizations and the government's central information center.

Sasebo community donates \$22,970 to tsunami-ravaged regions

BY GREG TYLER
Stars and Stripes

SASEBO NAVAL BASE, Japan — Despite at least half the estimated base population of 5,000 being deployed in support of various missions, individuals and organizations here dug deep into their pocketbooks by donating \$22,970 for victims of tsunamis that ravaged parts of South Asia Dec. 26.

"Support has ranged from children donating the entire contents of their piggy banks, to command social and religious organizations donating thousands of dollars," said Cmdr. Harvey Ranard, Sasebo's command chaplain.

Ranard was charged by base leadership

with overseeing fund-raising efforts for the disaster.

Although many charitable organizations are accepting donations for the tsunami tragedy, base commander Capt. Michael James designated the Religious Ministries Department as a donation hub in Sasebo.

"This is truly a testament to the strong sense of civic responsibility, overwhelming kindness and undeniable generosity of the CPAS [Commander Fleet Activities Sasebo] community," James said after receiving news of the tally.

Ranard said the donated funds are "in addition to a significant amount of food, clothing and other goods donated by our community which have already been delivered to the affected disaster areas."

Of almost \$23,000 announced Monday, Ranard said. "A majority will go to the Red Cross International Department earmarked for tsunami relief. A portion of the total will go to other organizations that specifically work for the welfare of children victimized by the calamity because that was the wish of the donors."

Ranard said he's never served in a community that has expressed such compassion through giving.

"My sincere thanks to each and every (individual) for providing such outstanding support for this urgent relief project," he said. "Our community may be small but our heart is big when it comes to helping our neighbors in times of need."

E-mail Greg Tyler at:
tylerg@stprimes.osd.mil



GREG TYLER/Stars and Stripes

Cmdr. Harvey Ranard, command chaplain at Sasebo Naval Base, took time Monday to record a message for the Armed Forces Network expressing gratitude to the community for donating almost \$23,000 to provide relief to victims of the Dec. 26 tsunamis.

Palestinian militants tell Abbas they will halt attacks

The Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — Militant groups have agreed to suspend attacks as they near a formal truce deal with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas and await Israel's response, a senior Palestinian official said Monday.

The militants' promise came after Israeli leaders said Sunday that Israel is ready to hold its fire if calm prevails, moving the two sides closer to ending four years of bloody conflict.

Israeli President Moshe Katsav, who holds a largely ceremonial post, called Abbas on Monday, Katsav's office said. The two leaders talked about the importance of working together for peace, a statement said.

U.S. envoy William Burns, a senior State Department official, is to arrive in the region later this week for talks with Israeli and Palestinian leaders on the emerging cease-fire deal. Abbas is seeking Israeli guarantees that he will halt military operations, includ-

ing arrest raids and targeted killings of militants.

Israel, in the past, has refused to grant amnesty to militants, but appeared to be softening its position. Asaf Shariv, an adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, said Israel would not make public declarations.

Abbas has also reached an understanding with the militant groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad on the terms of their political participation.

Abbas will regularly brief the leaders of the opposition groups in coming months, particularly on decisions regarding the planned Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.



Abbas

Cents and Sensibility

Money tip of the day

Messy desk = wealth?

The Associated Press

A worker survey suggests the state of your workplace might offer some insight into your personality, based on your income, gender and educational level.

The more you earn, the messier you might be, as only 11 percent of people making more than \$75,000 annually described themselves as "neat freaks," but 66 percent of those earning less than \$35,000 claimed that description.

Also, college graduates said

they're messier: Sixteen percent claimed to be tidy desk workers, while nearly a third of high school graduates (29 percent) said they're neat-desk folks.

Older workers were messier, too. Slightly more than a third, 36 percent, claimed a clean desk, while 60 percent of workers 18-24 years old said they keep their spaces organized.

The results are from a telephone survey of 2,039 adults in May conducted for staffing firm Aijon Office, part of global staffing firm Adecco Group.

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Officials gather to recall liberation of Nazi camps

By WILLIAM J. KOLE

The Associated Press

VIENNA, Austria — To the solemn strains of a choir, U.N. officials gathered in Vienna on Monday to kick off a week of events worldwide marking the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Nazi death camps.

Evoking images of the piles of human hair, eyeglasses and empty suitcases at Auschwitz, diplomats urged the international community to ensure the horrors of the Holocaust are never repeated.

Patrick Villerum, France's representative to U.N. organizations based in the Austrian capital, reminded about 200 officials and employees who gathered in the rotunda of the U.N. complex overlooking the Danube River that the United Nations was founded "as the world was awakening to the full horror of the camps."

Villerum urged nations to keep pulling together to ensure "there is never a repetition of these night-



U.N. officials gather at the Vienna international center on Monday to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Nazi death camps.

Only by working together can the world hope to "stamp out genocide wherever it may occur," Jenkins said.

"Without constant vigilance, [death camps] could again be part of our future," U.S. diplomat David Noble warned.

"Let us ensure that Auschwitz and the other camps will remain a byword of history for the path humanity refuses to take," he said.

In a brief but emotional address, Israeli diplomat Israel Michaeli said the Jewish state forever will bear the scars of the Holocaust, which he described as "the culmination of 1,500 years of anti-Semitism and hatred."

"Every generation must be on its guard to ensure such evil never happens again," he said.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Japanese yen (Jan. 24)	100.00
Saudi riyal (Jan. 22)	1,011.00
U.S. dollars (Jan. 24)	\$1.3112
Dollar buys (Jan. 24)	107.512
British pound (Jan. 24)	51.92
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	3.77
British pound	\$1.8797
Canada (Dollar)	71.21
Denmark (Krone)	5.6749
Egypt (Pound)	\$1.3051/0.7662
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.981
Hungary (Forint)	19.36
Iceland (Krona)	65.645
Israel (Sheqel)	1.848
Japan (Yen)	106.67
Kuwait (Dinar)	3.762
Norway (Krone)	6.3198
Philippines (Peso)	46.25
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7503
Singapore (Dollar)	1.6332
South Korea (Won)	1,038.00
Switzerland (Franc)	75.00
Thailand (Baht)	38.61
Turkey (New Lira)	1,4045

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military base exchange facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. U.S. purchasing exchange rates (in Germany, purchasing British pounds) in Germany, check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are international rates for dollars, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars to euros, and the euro, which is dollars to euros.)

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3-month bill	2.25
3-month bank	2.25
30-year bond	2.25

Sources: The Associated Press, Bank of America

New Iranian nuke plant

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran will inaugurate a uranium ore concentrate production plant near the southern port city of Bandar Abbas within a year, Iran's nuclear chief said.

Gholamreza Aghazadeh was quoted by state-run radio on Sunday as saying the Bandar Abbas Yellowcake Production Plant would open during the next Iranian calendar year, which begins March 21.

The nuclear facility will process ore extracted from uranium mine into uranium ore concentrate, known as yellowcake. The processing is part of the early stages before actual enrichment of uranium.

The United States accuses Iran of seeking nuclear weapons but Tehran has denied the accusation saying its nuclear program is geared solely toward making electricity.

Israel allays U.S. fears

JERUSALEM — Israel will follow the U.S. lead in dealing with Iran's nuclear aspirations, Vice Premier Shimon Peres said Monday, but he did not rule out military action if diplomatic and economic pressure fail to stop Tehran from developing nuclear weapons.

Last week, U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney said there is a concern that if the Iranian program is not stopped, Israel would at-

tack Iran's nuclear facilities and "let the rest of the world worry about cleaning up the diplomatic mess afterward."

Kenyan tribal unrest

NAIROBI, Kenya — Kikuyu and Maasai tribal fighters armed with machetes and spears clashed over scarce water supplies in central Kenya, killing at least 14 people in two days of fighting, police said Monday.

Thousands of people fled the fighting, which broke out Saturday in Mai Mahiu, about 37 miles northwest of Nairobi, said police spokesman Jasper Ombati. Scores were injured in the clashes, he said.

Yushchenko in Russia

MOSCOW — A day after taking office as Ukraine's president, Viktor Yushchenko arrived in Russia Monday to smooth relations with the Kremlin, which feared he would take his country out of Moscow's sphere of influence. But the reformist leader also named a fiery ally, whom Russia has been trying to arrest, as prime minister. Yushchenko's visit to Moscow is a delicate balancing act to move closer to the West while not upsetting relations with his powerful neighbor — a move for Russian President Vladimir Putin, the meeting could help undo the damage of his unsuccessful foray into Ukrainian politics.

From The Associated Press

Rose Mary Woods, secretary who erased Watergate tape, dies

BY MARK WILLIAMS
The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — In 1973, Rose Mary Woods emerged from the relative obscurity of typelisters and juggling schedules. The devoted secretary of President Nixon was in the middle of the Watergate crisis.

Woods, who ignited a firestorm when she said she inadvertently erased part of a crucial Watergate tape that had an 18½-minute gap, died Saturday at a nursing home in Alliance, about 60 miles south of Cleveland. She was 87.

Funeral home owner Roger Ruzek said Sunday he did not know the cause of death.

The gap in the tape of a June 20, 1972, conversation between Richard Nixon and chief of staff H.R. Haldeman was critical to the question of what Nixon knew about the break-in at Democratic headquarters in the Watergate complex three days earlier — and when he knew it.

Woods, who moved to northeastern Ohio after leaving the disgraced president's staff in 1976, never talked much about her years with the only American president to resign the office.

But Nixon considered her a member of the family. He wrote in his memoirs that it was Woods he asked to inform first lady Pat Nixon and his daughters in 1974 that he had decided to resign on Aug. 9.

When the time came for the

family to privately say goodbye to Nixon before he climbed aboard the helicopter headed for Air Force One, Woods stood by with Mrs. Nixon, daughters Tricia and Julie, and their husbands.

Julie Nixon Eisenhower and Tricia Nixon Cox said in a statement Sunday that Woods will be remembered for her devotion to the country and their family.

Woods, the granddaughter of an Irish stonemason, was born in Sebring, 20 miles southwest of Youngstown, on Dec. 26, 1917, and was raised in a strict Roman Catholic family.

She worked as a pottery company secretary in Sebring, then moved to Washington to become a typist on Capitol Hill, where she caught the eye of a rising Republican star, Congressman Richard Nixon of California. When he was elected to the Senate in 1950, he hired Woods as his secretary.

Nixon defended his loyal employee when fingers pointed at Woods, who said weeks transcribing subpoenaed White House tapes. "I know I did not do it," Nixon said. "I don't completely believe Rose when she says that she did not do it."

She denied she caused the full 18½-minute gap, testifying later that she inadvertently erased four or five minutes. The wrong rang while she was transcribing the tape, she said, and she accidentally hit the record button.

A picture in which he demonstrated her action became one of the most famous images of the era.

Northeast digging out from weekend blizzard

By THEO EMERY
The Associated Press

BOSTON — The city's airport partially reopened Monday but schools and courthouses were closed in many areas as the Northeast struggled to recover from the weekend's blizzard.

The roar of snowblowers and the scrape of shovels were heard as residents worked to free their sidewalks and cars from deep mounds of snow.

The storm dumped more than 3 feet of snow on Massachusetts, and drifts were piled up to the eaves of some one-story buildings.

Frustrated travelers waited for transportation after a weekend in which hundreds of airline flights were canceled.

Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney asked nonessential state workers in the eastern part of the state not to come to work, and Rhode Island Gov. Don Carlier closed all state and municipal offices Monday. School closings were reported from Maine to parts of Virginia.

At least 15 deaths were linked to the weather: three in Connecticut, three in Ohio, three in Wisconsin, two in Pennsylvania, and one each in Maryland, Delaware, Iowa and Massachusetts.

States of emergency were de-

clared in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New Jersey.

On Massachusetts' Nantucket island, where an 84 mph wind gust was reported, the storm plunged the entire island into darkness until power service was restored Sunday night. The island's fire department worked to reach to reach people at risk, such as the elderly and the very young, in areas cut off by drifts up to 6 feet high.

"We just don't have the equipment to handle that amount of snow," said Nantucket deputy fire chief Mark McDougall.

Two eastern Massachusetts communities — Salem and Plymouth — got 38 inches of snow each, according to the National Weather Service.

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Parishioners on Sunday gather at the Memorial Wall for the unborn at the Sacred Heart of Mary Catholic Church for the burial of several hundred fetuses received from a mortuary in Boulder, Colo.

AP

Roe v. Wade protesters get pep talk from Bush

By LAURIE KELLMAN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush told abortion opponents on Monday he shared their support for "a culture of life" and claimed progress in passing legislation to protect the vulnerable.

"We need most of all to change hearts and that is what we're doing," Bush said as anti-abortion activists marked the 32nd anniversary of the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion with a day of rallies, protests and other activities.

The issue took on new urgency with the likelihood of a high court vacancy.

Bush addressed marchers by phone from the presidential retreat at Camp David, Md., where he had spent the weekend.

Every anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the 1973 Supreme Court decision, prompts demonstrations by opponents and proponents of abortion rights. Activists on both sides of the abortion issue marched in

demonstrations across the country Saturday, the actual anniversary of the Jan. 23 decision.

This year there is increasing speculation about Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist's health. Three other justices have had cancer.

One or more court vacancies would give President Bush the chance to install another justice or justices who oppose the Roe decision, increasing the likelihood that at some point, the ruling could be overturned.

Bush conceded that a society "where every child is welcome ... may still be some way away."

Still, he said, he was working with Congress to pass "good, solid legislation to protect the vulnerable." He cited his signing of legislation last year to outlaw certain late-term abortions.

"You know, we come from many, different backgrounds, but what unites us is our understanding that the essence of civilization is this: The strong have a duty to protect the weak," Bush said.

Colo. church buries ashes

The Associated Press

BOULDER, Colo. — A Roman Catholic church buried the ashes of hundreds of aborted fetuses Sunday, drawing criticism that the church was exploiting women's grief to make a political statement.

A crowd of 250 parishioners prayed as the ashes were buried in the Sacred Heart of Mary Church cemetery, while a handful of protesters gathered nearby.

A mortuary hired by the abortion clinic to dispose of the fetuses had been giving the ashes to the church for years to be buried at a memorial. Dr. Warren Hern, clinic director, said he had no idea such an arrangement had been made.

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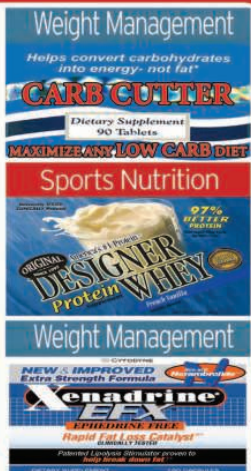
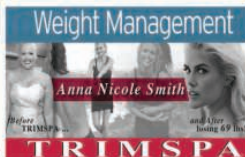
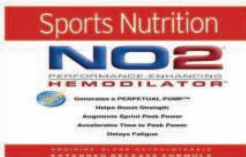
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Young comics found champion in Johnny

BY PAUL BROWNFIELD
Los Angeles Times

HOLLYWOOD — Backstage before her first appearance on "The Tonight Show" in 1985, Roseanne Barr read a letter she'd written to herself years before, dreaming of this moment. "This is the beginning of your life for the who is and is not yet," the letter said in part, as recounted in a profile of the comic by The New Yorker's John Lahr.

Much has been and will be said about how Johnny Carson "discovered" Roseanne, Jerry Seinfeld, Garry Shandling, David Letterman, Robin Williams and Ellen DeGeneres. But they all had managers and club careers by the time their "The Tonight Show" debut happened. Carson didn't discover them; what he did was take them by the hand and say, "Here, America."

I can't think of the last time a comedian went on a talk show and, in essence, was introduced to the nation — or even just to the entertainment industry. The platform, if not the performances, no longer exists, not since Carson created it during the three decades he ruled late night as host of the only game in town.

Carson was good for comedians in this way, but he was even better for comedy. He created space in his show for up-and-coming young talent to do their acts before a nationwide audience, but, just as importantly, he made it an event, a showcase, for which competition was fierce (you first had to gain the hard-won approval of "Tonight Show" producer Jim McCawley, who scouted Los Angeles clubs like a kind of prophet of either your future or your doom).

Once on the show, there were still barometers to gauge whether you had arrived. Did Johnny give you the OK sign or even, perhaps, wave you over to the couch? Shandling, noting in a 1991 interview with the Los Angeles Times that he didn't get to the couch after his first "Tonight Show" appearance, joked that "when you go to Johnny's house, you stand the first few

times you are there."

It sounds somewhat officious, the lordly position he created over the stand-up world, and there were odd undertones of betrayal to the attempts by Joan Rivers and Arsenio Hall to have competing late-night shows, to say nothing of the Shakespearean drama that unfolded before "The Tonight Show" went to Jay Leno instead of Carson's favored son, Letterman.

Whatever was happening backstage, the rewards for the viewer were tangible. If Carson functioned as a paterfamilias for new comics, he got cheerfully and shrewdly out of the way of the established ones, who did their sets and

then came over to sit down on the couch — usually because Carson thought they were a riot and wanted to continue to interact with them. In this way he taught us how to appreciate a comic, to fulfill his appreciation, whether the act was Steven Wright or Don Rickles or Rivers or Dangerfield or Dan Aykroyd — among the comedians, as I recall it, who had the ability to reduce Carson to tears.

Today, a comic on a talk show is, if not an anomaly, then just a comic on a talk show. A talk show that is more than likely hosted by someone who used to be a comic and who now spends the first 15 or 20 minutes of his or her show establishing who in the room is funniest, behaving like, well, a comic, so that by the time the other comic comes on — deep into the show, by which time you're asleep — it feels strictly like filler.

We could feel his in their time — a young Albert Brooks, an older Henry Youngman. Leno himself debuted on Carson in 1977, appeared a few more times in the ensuing months, then endured a seven-year drought.

Since then, the ground has shifted. Indeed, while Leno, Letterman and Conan O'Brien have used their success to form production companies that develop sitcoms on which they serve as executive producers, none have created the kind of training ground that Carson — who never branded his name beyond "The Tonight Show" — did.

*Once on the show,
there were still
barometers to
gauge whether you
had arrived. Did
Johnny give you
the OK sign or
even, perhaps,
wave you over to
the couch?*



NBC/AP

David Letterman appears as a guest on "The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson." Carson's show was a proving ground for a generation of now-famous comics such as Letterman, Roseanne, Jerry Seinfeld, Garry Shandling, Robin Williams and Ellen DeGeneres.

Carson was 'a little bit of devil, a whole lot of angel'

Friends, colleagues recall fondest memories

BY LYNN ELBER

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Stars who spent time on Johnny Carson's "Tonight Show" couch came away with a shared insight: America's late-night TV buddy was a singular talent and man.

"It's a sad day for his family and his country," David Letterman said. "All of us who came after are pretenders. We will not see the likes of him again ... He was the best, a star and a gentleman."

Carson, who died Sunday at age 79, was a celebrity who remained true to himself, actor-comedian Jerry Lewis said.

"I think that Johnny, no matter how long he lived in Hollywood, and no matter how much money he made, he still had a piece of straw stuck in his ear," Lewis told Fox News.

Daytime's top talk show host, Oprah Winfrey, paid Carson high tribute. "I think he's been one of the greats of our time," she said.

Actress-singer Bette Midler, who memorably serenaded Carson during his next-to-last show, remembered him warmly.

"It was his last guest, and it was one of the most moving experiences of my life. He had it all. A little bit of devil, a whole lot of angel, wit, charm, good looks, superb

timing and great, great class," she said in a statement.

Billy Crystal called Carson "the greatest talk show host of our time with the quickest mind. To me, he always knew exactly who he was and was always in control. He was a true giant."

When Carson called one year to praise Crystal's performance as Oscar host, "it was one of the greatest thrills of my career," the actor-comedian recalled.

California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger called him a "great friend" who welcomed him on "Tonight" when he was a relatively unknown bodybuilder.

"He brought out the best in people. Hollywood has lost one of its most esteemed pioneers, but he leaves a proud legacy that will inspire generations to come," Schwarzenegger said in a statement.

Ed McMahon was Carson's longtime "Tonight" sidekick, introducing him nightly by like a royal trumpeter with a cry of "Heccececece the Johnny!" and serving as ever-reliable straight man.

"Johnny Carson was a man I considered like a brother to me," McMahon said in a statement that recalled a professional life together of 34 years and the friendship that held after Carson retired in 1992.

Whenever he faced a major post-"Tonight" career decision, McMahon said, "I always got the OK from The Boss."

High court rejects appeal of Fla. right-to-die case

BY GINA HOLLAND

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court refused Monday to reinstate a Florida law passed to keep a severely brain-damaged woman hooked to a feeding tube, clearing the way for the tube to be removed. How soon that would happen, however, was unclear.

The Florida Supreme Court had struck down the law last fall, and the justices were the last hope for state leaders who defended the law in a bitter, long-running dispute over the fate of Terri Schiavo.

Her husband, Michael Schiavo, contends she never wanted to be

kept alive artificially. But her parents told justices in a filing that their son-in-law is trying to rush her death so he can inherit her estate and be free to marry another woman.

The Supreme Court did not comment in rejecting an appeal from Gov. Jeb Bush, who argued that the state had the authority to step in and pass the 2003 law that ordered Terri Schiavo's feeding tube reinserted six days after her husband had it removed.

The case goes back to state Judge George Greer, who already has ruled that the brain-damaged woman's husband could with-

draw her feeding tube.

"It's judicial homicide. They want to murder her," her father, Robert Schindler, said Monday. "I have no idea what the next step will be. We're going to fight for her, but we won't fight for her. She deserves a chance."

The case was one of two right-to-die appeals pending at the high court. Justices are expected to decide in the next month whether to consider a Bush administration request to block the nation's only law allowing doctors to help terminally ill patients die more quickly. Oregon voters passed that law in 1998.

In other developments Monday, the court:

■ Gave police broader search powers during traffic stops, ruling that drug-sniffing dogs can be used to check out motorists' cars even if officers have no reason to suspect they may be carrying narcotics.

■ Declined to consider whether states may offer license plates with anti-abortion messages, leaving lower courts divided over whether the programs in 16 states unconstitutionally restrict dissenting views.

■ Asked federal courts to reconsider sentences for hundreds of defendants who contend they

were wrongly punished under a sentencing system the court declared unconstitutional earlier this month.

■ Reinstated the death sentence of a man convicted of bludgeoning to death an elderly couple in Memphis, Tenn. Justice said aside a ruling by the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for Gary Bradford Cone.

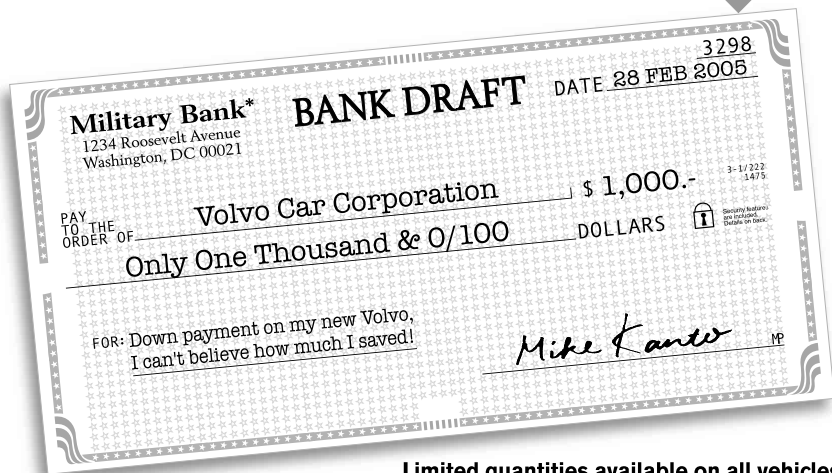
■ Threw out the appeal of Mississippi death row inmate Marlon Howell less than two months after hearing his case, on grounds that Howell's legal arguments were not properly argued in lower courts first.

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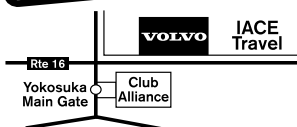
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FACES

Reaction takes Alda by surprise

Alan Alda says he's constantly approached by people surprised at his portrayal of a conservative Republican senator on the TV show "The West Wing."



Alda

"I was never asked that when I played a murderer," Alda said.

The NBC drama is setting up a long-running story line in which Alda will run for president against a Democrat portrayed by Jimmy Smits. The winner will be inaugurated on "The West Wing" a year from now.

John Wells, the show's executive producer, said it has not been decided who will win. He said the show will resist an interactive game in which viewers decide the winner because the production schedule needs to be set too far in advance.

eBay sale to aid tsunami victims

Celebrities including actress Eva Longoria and singer Avril Lavigne will auction off personal items on eBay to raise money for survivors of the South Asian tsunami.

Beginning Feb. 7, 40 items will hit the Web site, including "Desperate Housewives" co-star Longoria's cheerleading uniform and a signed skateboard from rocker Lavigne.

The drive, with proceeds going to Save the Children's Asia Earthquake/Tsunami Relief Fund, is sponsored by US Weekly magazine.

The eBay auction will end Feb. 24.

Golden girl goes buff

Betty White — yes, that Betty White — goes flesh-toned for a scene in her new TV movie.

During the filming of the Hallmark Channel original movie "Anne's Point," White, 83, peered at Amy Davidson went bare, sort of, for a grandmother-granddaughter skin-dipping scene.



White

"We were not method acting," White said in a statement.

"We had little strapless bathing suits on. I mean, we can act like we're naked."

'Sex' star falls into the Gap — again

Actress Sarah Jessica Parker is falling into more Gap advertisements.

The former "Sex and the City" star has signed on to represent the clothing chain in its spring 2005 marketing campaign — the third straight in which she's been involved. Her spots premier sometime in March.

"I think the Gap is terrifically creative and inspired," said Parker in a statement. "Women will love the clothes for spring."

The campaign will encompass more television and print ads, direct mail and online and in-store marketing elements.

In a previous Gap ad, a cast of digitally added Parker clones trooped around rock star Lenny Kravitz in another, Parker posed with actor Josh Duhamel and R&B singer Mary J. Blige.



Parker

Grammer considers a role in politics

Kelsey Grammer has an eye toward politics, but right now he's focused on playing his ailing wife.

His wife, former Playboy model Camille Donatucci, picked up a parasite last year in Italy, said Grammer, who was in Washington for a recent inaugural event.

"My wife was very ill over the summer and we're still kind of recuperating her health," Grammer told AP Radio. The 49-year-old actor said he's considering running for political office one day. "I come from a family that is traditionally in service. I've always felt an obligation to spend some time in service to the country."

Will Grammer be on the ballot soon? Not likely. Grammer, who starred on the popular NBC comedy series "Frasier," says he won't run until "no one really thinks I'm doing it because I'm out of an acting job. The truth is, it would probably be easily another decade, maybe 20 (years)."

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

Bankable Ben

Stiller's charismatic qualities put him among elite performers at the box office

BY ROBERT W. WELKOS

Los Angeles Times

HOLLYWOOD

It's a chilly weekday evening at the Lakewood Center mall's Pacific Theatres megaplex, situated in a slice of Southern California suburbia, and people are trickling up to the box office window to purchase tickets for the season's blockbuster comedy, Universal Pictures' "Meet the Fockers."

The movie, which as of Sunday had grossed more than \$240 million after five weeks in domestic release, features an all-star cast — including Robert De Niro, Dustin Hoffman and Barbra Streisand — but one of the film's major draws is the 39-year-old, curly-haired Ben Stiller, who has emerged as a box-office powerhouse.

For the last year, Stiller has been on a roll. Besides "Meet the Fockers," the sequel to 2000's hit comedy "Meet the Parents," Stiller starred in three other successful films in 2004. "Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story," which ranked in \$114.3 million in domestic ticket sales; "Starsky & Hutch," which grossed \$88.2 million domestically; and "Along Came Polly," which took in \$88.1 million domestically.

That steady box-office clout has elevated Stiller's paycheck to about \$15 million per picture.

But defining Stiller's appeal isn't easy, even for his audience.

"It just seems like he makes movies out of ordinary stuff," said Jay Reyes, 23, of South Gate, standing near the "Dodgeball" theater's ticket window. "Like, who's going to make a movie out of dodge ball?" he chuckled.

"Ben Stiller."

Anna Rice, 46, of Long Beach, who was also here into the theater to see "Meet the Fockers," recalled an earlier Stiller comedy she liked called "Zoolander," in which he played Derek Zoolander, a vacuous male supermodel known for his patented "look." Blue Steel.

"I know it was corny, but I thought he was very good in it," Rice said. "He is definitely marketable. How can you pinpoint it? Some people have it and some don't."

Oscar-winner Hoffman, who plays Stiller's free-spirited father in "Meet the Fockers," said what impressed him about Stiller was that he wasn't looking for the laugh so much as the irony of a situation.

"There's a great danger in (actors) trying to get the laugh," Hoffman said.

"If you are in a scene with him, you could not wish to be with a better fail," Hoffman said. "He will set you up. It's like basketball. He doesn't take every shot, like some basketball players we know. He'll pass you the ball because he's interested in the scene."

Hoffman said it also surprised him to discover Stiller had an actor's sensibility rather than a performer's.

"Usually, people who come from comedy tend to perform the part rather than act it," Hoffman said. "There is a difference. But I [real-

ized after working with him that] he came from an acting base. The reason is, he was never satisfied, which is kind of a core ingredient to being a good actor."

Owen Wilson — who has worked with Stiller on such films as "The Cable Guy," "The Royal Tenenbaums" and "Meet the Parents," and has a small role in "Meet the Fockers" — said audiences were introduced to Stiller's brand of humor more than a decade ago when Stiller had a comedy show on MTV and later signed with Fox, which aired "The Ben Stiller Show" in the 1992-93 television season.

"I think people sort of began catching on to his humor with his [Fox] show," Wilson said. "It didn't have a big audience, but it developed sort of a cult following. And I think he sort of built on that to where people kind of caught up with him."

Stiller doesn't rely on stand-up routines to make people laugh, Wilson said.

"He couldn't be further from a class clown or somebody who is on all the time," Wilson said. "That's not Ben, and that's not his brand of humor."

Jim Carrey, Will Ferrell and Adam Sandler may have bigger marquee names, but Stiller's box-office appeal is growing. It now reaches beyond U.S. shores, where American comedy doesn't easily translate with foreign audiences. As evidence, The Wall Street Journal recently reported that Stiller's blockbuster "Meet the Parents," took in 49.7 percent, or \$164.2 million, of its total ticket sales abroad, while last year's "Along Came Polly" garnered 48.5 percent, or \$83 million, in foreign markets.

That is not to say Stiller hasn't had his share of flops. "Envy," a DreamWorks comedy co-starring Jack Black, grossed \$12.2 million last year, and his pairing with Drew Barrymore in the Miramax comedy "Duplicat" sank like a stone after sitting on a shelf for at least a year, grossing a mere \$9.7 million. But when he's in the right vehicle, he reaches all demographics, from teens to adults and both sexes as well, studio executives agree, and his movies are not astronomically expensive ("Fockers," on which Universal partnered with DreamWorks, cost an estimated \$80 million).

Stiller can be funny whether he's doing broad comedy or just delivering a pained expression, said Stacey Snider, head of Universal Pictures.

There's a scene in "Meet the Fockers," Snider said, in which the families are sitting around having drinks outside when Hoffman strays into an inappropriate conversation, and Stiller falls backward out of his chair. "You can't help but laugh when he flips over," Snider said. Conversely,

there's another scene where Hoffman becomes upset after learning that his son had gone duck hunting with father-in-law-to-be De Niro, who is looking on.

"Ben doesn't say anything," Snider says. "He knows he [loses] either way. He makes this great perplexed face and decides it's best to exit. People [in the audience] howl at nothing."



AP

OPINION

With our support, Abbas can make progress

The Washington Post

Two months after the death of Yasser Arafat, politicians such as President Bush and Britain's Tony Blair are still making speeches about a "moment of opportunity" for progress toward an Israeli-Palestinian peace. But moments pass quickly and, in the Gaza Strip, this one already is in motion.

Mahmoud Abbas, who was inaugurated as the new Palestinian president only [11] days ago, was immediately challenged by Islamic militants as well as by fighters from his own Fatah organization who defied his calls for a cease-fire by staging attacks on Israeli checkpoints and firing rockets at a nearby town. Israel responded with its own deadly raids and threatened a full-scale invasion of Gaza.

To his credit, Abbas responded decisively, deploying hundreds of Palestinian security forces to prevent further violence, in cooperation with Israel. In doing so, he preserved his new administration from an instant loss of authority. But the situation remains both fluid and fragile: It could be helped by timely intervention from the foreign leaders who have been making those speeches.

The first burden still lies with Abbas, who must demonstrate both to his people and to the world that he will decisively

break with Arafat's losing strategy of publicly depicting violence against Israel while preserving and sometimes encouraging terrorist organizations.

Abbas' intention has been to persuade the militants to agree to a cease-fire. While that might be a useful move, the events of [last] week have demonstrated that political persuasion alone will not suffice. The deployment of Palestinian forces was an important first step by Abbas toward asserting military as well as political authority. But it needs to be quickly followed up with reorganization of the various Palestinian security services and disarming those outside them.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who suspended contacts with Abbas as a way of pressing for action, is cooperating with the Palestinian effort to impose order. As he prepares for the planned withdrawal of Israeli settlements and soldiers from Gaza, Sharon has much to gain through collaboration with Abbas. A peaceful pullout governed by accord between the Palestinian Authority and Israel would be a political victory for both leaders, while a unilateral Israeli withdrawal under fire is exactly what extremists gain by aiming at.

If the rockets and suicide bombings continue, Israel may have no choice but to take its own defensive action. But if Abbas gets results, Israel should cease its attacks on militants.



Many in Israel will oppose that step. They prefer the policy Sharon pursued until November, which was to unilaterally redraw Israel's borders and indefinitely postpone negotiations with Palestinians.

That's where Bush, Blair and others ought to come in. U.S. officials have been rightly pressing Abbas not to shrink from

the militants' challenge, and they have been encouraging Israel to show restraint.

But the administration also has a role to play in encouraging and brokering a more enduring Israeli-Palestinian security agreement that maximizes the chances for ending the violence in Gaza. If that much-talked-about moment is really to be seized, now is the time for U.S. involvement.

Plan for study on gun ownership won't leave holster

The National Research Council, billed as an "adviser to the nation on science, engineering and medicine," released a report last month that found there is not enough statistical evidence available to determine whether efforts to control violence by restricting guns are effective.

The spinmeisters on both sides of the gun-control-vs.-gun-rights debate could have a heyday with this.

The NRC's analysis says that what America needs is a federally supported "robust research program" on firearms to answer questions such as whether there should be restrictions on who may possess firearms, on the number or types of guns that can be purchased, and whether safety locks should be required.

"These and many related policy questions cannot be answered definitively because of large gaps in the existing science base," Charles F. Wellford, a professor of criminal justice at the University of Maryland, College Park, and the chairman of the committee that wrote the report, said in a news release.

A "federal" research project, huh? Think Alfred Kinsey had a tough time getting 1950s America to talk honestly about human sexuality? That was nothing compared to getting gun owners in 2005 to truthfully tell the government about what's in their safes and night stands. Imagine, if you will, the telephone rings.

"What voice says?" "Ms. Labbe, we're calling today on behalf of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct a survey on gun ownership in America."

"What can you hear?" "We're the feds. We have your name, we have your phone number, we know where you live, and we think gun owners are diseased."

"What voice says?" "How many firearms

do you own?"

"What gun owner says": "None of your business."

Click. Dial tone.

On an intellectual level, the need for a definitive study is apparent. Just look at the point counterpoints that are spun these days from an issue such as the impact of right-to-carry laws. Thirty-four states, including Texas, have statutes that allow certain adults to carry concealed handguns. Every time another state legislature takes a look at proposing a similar law, the gun-control people go ballistic about how it will lead to increased violent crime.

The gun-rights crowd matches the rhetoric by saying such laws decrease violent crime. Both sides cite existing studies that bolster their arguments.

Just this month, the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence United With the Million Mom March (seriously, that's what's on the top of the electronic news release) warned that "most U.S. states don't make the grade when it comes to gun violence prevention laws."

Of course, the Brady Center assumes that any state with a concealed-carry law is an

evil place and automatically marks it down — even though, according to the NRC, definitive research to support that supposition doesn't exist.

The NRC report said that new research tools are needed to evaluate right-to-carry laws — that it is impossible to draw any strong conclusions about their effects from research on hand. The center is calling for the development of a National Violent Death Reporting System and a National Incident-Based Reporting System to begin collecting data.

Yet here's the problem with an "incident-based" reporting system: When a gun owner successfully thwarts a crime by "using" a firearm, often it occurs without a shot being fired. If you scare off an intruder at your home by displaying a gun, what are the odds that you'll call the local sheriff to report it? Slim.

When is an incident not an incident? When it's not reported.

But now we're back to the "anecdotes do not solid data make" refrain that can legitimately be voiced by the gun-control advocates.

When asked her thoughts about a national

research project on firearm ownership, Alice Tripp provided an answer that reflects the quandary that some gun owners might find themselves in if queried in a survey.

"My immediate response would be ... I ain't saying nothing!" said Tripp, an Austin lobbyist for the Texas State Rifle Association. "But then my second impulse is to want people to understand that I consider protecting rights to be paramount and that personal safety is necessary and instinctive."

It is important to note that the NRC study does not address specific state or federal gun policies — only the quality of available research data on firearm violence, control and prevention efforts.

And the quality isn't good, not if opposing sides can look at existing studies on, say, suicide and criminal violence and reach conflicting conclusions on what role gun ownership by private citizens plays in those statistics.

But good luck, Uncle Sam, on gathering accurate data on who owns firearms.

Jill "J.R." Labbe is a senior editorial writer and columnist for the Fort Worth (Texas) Star-Telegram.

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY





Midshipmen throw snowballs while playing in the snow in downtown Annapolis, Md.

Snowball fight



Jeff Snodgrass shows how he can use suction to stick five soda cans to his face during an audition for The Late Show's Stupid Human Tricks held at the Omplex in Oklahoma City.

Stupid human tricks



Children eat ice cream in Hattiesburg, Miss., as part of a lesson on the letter "I" given at the Early Encounters preschool. From left, Will Bustin, 4; Dillon Morgan, 4; Walker Matlich, 5; Austin Baker, 5; Caden Stowall, 5; and Payton Brewer, 5.

Tasty lesson

Two die in plane crash

TX ABILENE — Two Dallas men died when their single-engine airplane clipped a power line and crashed near Brownwood.

Paulose Mathai, 50, and Karl Robert Brinker, 28, were flying from Dallas and approaching Brownwood Regional Airport when the crash occurred about 7 a.m., according to the Department of Public Safety in Brownwood.

The men were in a Beech 36 model, single-engine plane when the landing gear clipped a power line, a DPS spokeswoman said. The plane hit a group of standing trees, the left wing broke off and the aircraft burst into flames, The Abilene Reporter-News reported.

Airport expansion

VA RESTON — A Reston-based developer who has fought the multibillion-dollar plan to extend Metrolink to Dulles International Airport has offered his own proposal to ease northern Virginia's transportation woes.

Under his plan, Chris Walker said his company would widen Interstate 66 and the Dulles Toll Road between Washington and the airport — a congested 27-mile route.

Walker said he would pay for the project by charging a toll that would vary with the time of day on some of the lanes. Other lanes would be free, which means drivers willing to pay would save time by traveling in the restricted lanes with fewer cars.

The Virginia Department of Transportation is considering three similar proposals from private businesses for stretches of the Capital Beltway and Interstate 95.

Taking on obesity

ME PORTLAND — Obesity will be one of the issues on the Legislature's agenda now that lawmakers have passed a tax relief bill.

Lawmakers will consider bills to require chain restaurants to list calories on menus; have schools give parents confidential reports on their child's body fat; and stop teachers from using junk food to reward students.

With obesity on the rise in Maine, supporters of the bills say it's time to address poor nutrition and lack of physical activity.

Obesity has grown 20 percent over the last decade, with more than half of Maine adults overweight or obese and nearly 30 percent of high schoolers overweight or at risk of becoming so.

If current trends continue, obesity will overtake tobacco as the leading cause of preventable death, health experts say.

Airport inspections

HI HONOLULU — The state Department of Transportation will use \$447,768 from the airport special fund to inspect airfields and to update pavement management systems plans for 14 airports throughout the state.

The federal government's share for the project is \$2.5 million, according to state officials, who said Gov. Linda Lingle had released the state money.

Data collected from the inspec-

tions will be used to formulate new short- and long-term plans to maintain and upgrade airfields, the governor's office said.

The inspections are required every three years by the Federal Aviation Administration to determine the amount of federal funding for airfield pavement rehabilitation projects, officials said.

"This important preventative effort, which uses airport special funds and federal dollars, will help in our ongoing plan to improve the airport infrastructure on all islands," DOT Director Rod Haraga said.

Missing hard drive

CO GREELEY — A computer hard drive missing from the University of Northern Colorado contained personal information about thousands of employees and their families, the university has said.

UNC officials said the missing equipment includes the names, birth dates, Social Security and bank account numbers and other information about employees' beneficiaries as well as about 15,790 current and former workers.

The total could be more than 30,000 people, officials said.

University officials said they do not know whether the drive was misplaced or stolen, but campus police have launched a criminal investigation.

Four-alarm blaze

NH CANTERBURY — Firefighters from about a dozen communities worked in frigid temperatures to control a four-alarm fire triggered by a gasoline vapor explosion in a sod farm workshop.

The fire broke out at the Gold Star Farm around 2 p.m., and about 60 firefighters from as far away as Northwood were called to the scene. The fire was contained in about an hour, and it was declared under control just before 5 p.m.

Mutual Aid Fire Chief Richard Wright said the fire destroyed perhaps a quarter to a third of a sprawling storage building that contained equipment and chemicals, including pesticides.

"Basically, we probably saved three-quarters of the building," he said. "We were able to cut it off inside the building."

Boy reunited with family

FL OCALA — An 11-year-old boy who had been taken from his school by a convicted child molester was reunited with his family while dozens of police searched for the kidnapping suspect in Georgia.

The boy was hugged by his mother as he emerged from a police car outside the Marion County sheriff's office.

His father, Ivert Kirkirk, said the boy was surprised by all the attention and looked good after the ordeal. "He said, 'Dad, stop crying,'" Kirkirk said.

Meanwhile, police continued searching for Frederick Fretz, 42, who was believed to be hiding in woods near where the boy was found in northern Georgia, said Maj. Mike Powell of the police department in Emerson, Ga. Powell said there was no indication the boy had been molested.

Stories and photos from wire services

Horoscope

Mercury and stern Saturn are in opposition, highlighting the awareness and power of our words. We'll then in the full knowledge that they have the power to teach, wound, inspire and activate. Also, be aware enough to say what you really mean because the meaning comes across regardless. You may as well be in control of your message.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY
(January 26). Your support team rallies around you on your side and value to your days. In the next three months, presume innocence of your fellow man, and your way is made easy. For many of you, a new job is featured in May. Something you saved for is yours in June. Taurus and Virgo are lucky for love.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Poor everybody else. If they are competing with you now, they should prepare to lose. You're really thinking and growing. If it can be done cheaper, safer or faster, you'll find a way.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Roles are carefully delineated. The better you understand the power structure at work, the more effective you'll be. Know to whom you should be talking and to whom you should be listening.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Unless you're looking at all the possibilities, there's a good chance you're running on autopilot. "If" is in the middle of the word "life." Today, you can expand your word life by asking yourself, "What if?"

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Associate with people who have the potential to enlarge your mind—real poet-warrior types. Otherwise, it's difficult to see the opportunity that's staring in the face this afternoon.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). We are an interesting species, aren't we? Capable of such great feats and

such colossal mistakes. Don't worry or try to hide your mess now. Your human foibles make you more lovable.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).

You've got a mind for numbers and will come up with brilliant ways to add more zeros to your income. Tonight, you must consider whether you'd rather be popular or be true to your authentic self.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You're reasonable, as usual, but a relative is stubborn and slightly insane. Fighting this person is silly. Let him or her have the day.

When people stop resisting this person's ideas, he or she will settle down.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). It's official. An ex-love is no longer lost in some distant part of the universe. He or she is back, either in your mind or in your space. You'll have to deal with the reasons the relationship didn't work out in the first place.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). The biggest issue is how you're going to make more money in less time. It's not so much about being efficient as it is about choosing projects that compel you so you lose track of time altogether.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). It is important to understand everyone else's agenda. An apology could be the only thing standing between you and a goal. Don't be too proud to say that you were wrong. A Leo loves you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). History repeating itself is the theme, but it doesn't have to. Put yourself on the back for the emotional muscle tone you've obviously developed since last time. You're not going to make the same mistakes twice.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Public expectations figure strongly into your activities. It's tempting to do what you think will bring you praise. Be careful that you're not portraying a stereotype of what you believe you should be.

Creators Syndicate

Holiday Mathis



Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start



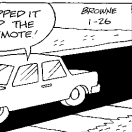
Zits



Cathy



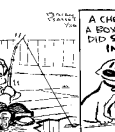
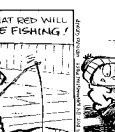
Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



Red and Rover



Better or Worse



Peanuts



Fox trot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



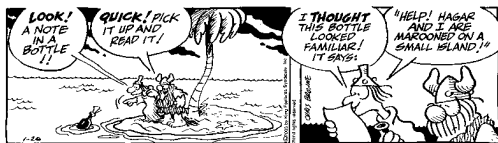
Blondie



Dilbert



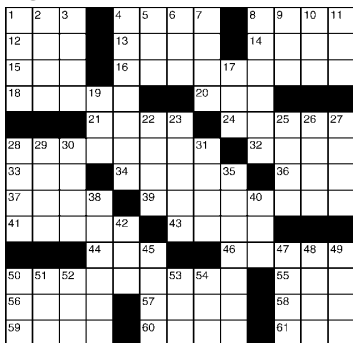
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 That guy
- 4 Prima donna
- 8 Aware of
- 12 Raw mineral
- 13 Bucks' mates
- 14 "OK"
- 15 Zero-star review
- 16 Trendy
- 18 Peer
- 20 Nevertheless
- 21 Applaud
- 24 Crowbar
- 28 Guaranteed
- 32 Start over
- 33 Part of DJIA
- 34 Puts on the line
- 36 Self
- 37 Elevator name
- 39 Owning
- 41 By the book
- 43 Comet feature
- 44 Driver's license datum
- 46 Dracula's waking hours
- 50 Glenn Miller
- 52 Song
- 55 Scull tool
- 56 2000 movie, "Drowning —"
- 57 German car
- 58 Falschheid
- 59 Bohemian
- 60 Unsorted
- 61 Saute

Down

- 1 Clinton's hometown
- 2 OPEC member
- 3 Carte
- 4 Taught by rote
- 5 Charged bit
- 6 Dr. Doolittle, e.g.
- 7 Wan
- 8 Pearl's home day?
- 9 Fresh
- 10 Mai —
- 11 Resistance unit
- 17 Silthery one
- 19 Essen expletive
- 22 Hillside shelter
- 23 Emulate
- 25 Swerve
- 26 Move gradually
- 27 Cross

Across

- 28 "American —"
- 29 Memorandum
- 30 Brick + house :: — nest
- 31 "— life!"
- 35 Big dance party
- 38 Glide
- 40 Actor Wallace
- 42 Gypsy Rose —
- 45 Grand opening day?
- 47 "A good walk spoiled," said Twain
- 48 "Aquarius" show
- 49 Deuce beater
- 50 "— Little Teapot"
- 51 Neither mate
- 52 Stick with a kick
- 53 Chic no more
- 54 Harem room

Answer to Previous Puzzle



I-26

CRYPTOQUIP

OQBD F LFD YZKBT YS
USLIBA RSJ YS NJR F
NSFY, OSJAC RSJ USDTKCBZ

KEY F TFKAT IKYUQ?

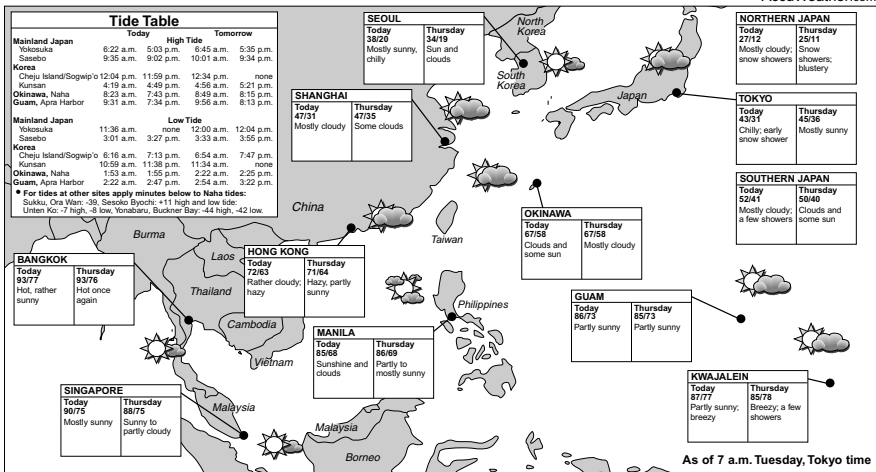
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: MY ADVICE: DON'T HOLD LOOSE CHANGE AROUND VENDING MACHINES. THEY ARE COINIVOROUS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Y equals T

The Pacific Forecast

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Venus, Myskina, Dementieva eliminated

Hewitt wins in five sets despite injury; Roddick, Davenport also advance

By PAUL ALEXANDER

The Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Venus Williams lost to Alicia Molik of Australia 7-5, 7-6 (3) Monday in the fourth round of the Australian Open, extending her Grand Slam drought and keeping her from joining sister Serena in the quarterfinals.

Williams was seeking her fifth Grand Slam title and first since winning the 2001 U.S. Open. She reached five finals after that, but hasn't made it past the quarterfinals of a major since injuring an abdominal muscle in mid-2003.

Molik, the Olympic bronze medalist last year in Athens, will face No. 1 seed and 2000 champion Lindsay Davenport, who polished off Karolina Sprem 6-2, 6-2 earlier Monday. It's the first time that Molik, who stretched her winning streak to 12 matches, has reached the quarterfinals of a Grand Slam.

"This is a huge feat. I beat Venus," Molik said. "I beat her playing my tennis, and I didn't wait for her to make mistakes, and that's something I can be pretty proud of."

She broke the eighth-seeded Williams at love to finish off the first set, then fought off five break points in the second.

Both players held to force a tiebreaker, where Molik showed her best, jumping to a 4-0 lead, then falling again on a running forehand that she netted. She shook it off and finished off the match when Williams weakly hit a forehand into the net.

Molik refused to wilt under Williams' power attack, firing seven aces and other winners that kissed the lines.

"I couldn't quite get a handle on what was going wrong," Williams said. "Normally if I'm playing 5 percent better, I'd win."

Molik became the first Australian woman to reach the quarters since Anne Minter 17 years ago. Fellow Aussie Lleyton Hewitt also advanced Monday, overcoming a sore right hip to beat unseeded Rafael Nadal 7-5, 3-6, 1-6, 7-6 (3), 6-2 victory.

Trying to finish points quickly to limit his movement, Hewitt committed five consecutive errors in the fourth set after going ahead 0-40 while holding a 3-2 lead.

Then he proved that he was indeed his reputation as a batter.

Hewitt got to a tiebreaker and won it, punctuating the points with his trademark fist pumps and shouts of "Come on!"

That got the fans roaring and

left the 18-year-old Nadal shaking his head.

Being pushed to five sets seemed to take some of the steam out of Nadal. He asked for a massage on his left thigh after Hewitt broke twice and ran off a 3-0 lead in the deciding fifth set.

While serving for the match at 5-2, Hewitt had a double-fault and two unforced errors to give Nadal a pair of break points. He fought back to deuce, double-faulted on his first match point and squandered a second, then finished with an ace and a backhand from Nadal that sailed just long after a lengthy rally.

Hewitt dropped to his knees in celebration as the crowd roared.

"This crowd is second to none," said Hewitt, who also rallied for Davis Cup victories on the same court. "I was hurting a little bit in the third set. You try to get all of the negative thoughts out of your mind."

Hewitt added that the injury, first sustained at warmup tournament in Sydney, should not affect him in his next match, when he will face the winner of an all-Australian match between No. 6 Guillermo Coria and No. 9 David Nalbandian.

After three consecutive lefties, Andy Roddick struggled with the serve of right-handed German Philipp Kohlschreiber. But the second-seeded American smacked 15 aces and overcame a second-set letdown to reach the quarterfinals with a 6-3, 7-6 (8), 6-1 win.

"I think I actually had a little trouble getting used to a serve coming from a righty, as weird as that sounds," he said.

"Took me a little while to get on it."

He'll face another right-hander next, 25th-seeded Nikolay Davydenko, who beat No. 12 Guillermo Canas 6-3, 6-4, 6-3. Earlier in the tournament, Davydenko eliminated No. 7 Tim Henman.

Roddick allowed the 102nd-ranked Kohlschreiber only one break opportunity while he figured out his righty serve. He was erratic in the second set, doubling his number of unforced errors to 12 and throwing his racket to the court after sending a forehand long.

"I don't think I hit the ball as clean as I did in the first three matches," he said. "I just felt like I was fighting it a little bit more. I'm not too concerned. The good thing is I don't feel like I had my best day, and we're here talking about a three-set win."

Along with Venus Williams,



Venus Williams, the eighth seed, reacts in frustration during her fourth-round match against 10th-seeded Alicia Molik in the Australian Open at Melbourne Park on Monday. Molik won the match, 7-5, 7-6.



Third-seeded Lleyton Hewitt overcame a hip injury and a 2-1 sets deficit to beat Rafael Nadal in five sets, 7-5, 3-6, 1-6, 7-6, 6-2.

Anastasia Myskina, the French Open champion, and No. 6 Elena Dementieva, the runner-up at the French and U.S. Opens, were eliminated.

Myskina and Dementieva were among seven Russians to make it to the round of 16, but only Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova and U.S. Open finalist Svetlana Kuznetsova reached the quarterfinals.

They will face each other on Tuesday, when men's No. 1 seed Roger Federer will try to keep his

25-match winning streak alive against four-time Australian Open winner Andre Agassi, seeded eighth.

Myskina had 45 unforced errors in her 6-4, 6-2 loss to 19th-seeded Nathalie Dechy.

"I couldn't focus during the match, I lost a lot of early balls," Myskina said. "I think I have to forget this match."

Dementieva led 12th-seeded Patty Schnyder by a set and two breaks before losing 6-7 (6), 7-6 (4), 6-2.

Tennis scoreboard

Australian Open

Monday

At Melbourne Park
Melbourne, Australia
Purse: \$14.5 million (Grand Slam)
Surface: Hard-Outdoor
Singles

Men

Fourth Round

Andy Roddick (2), United States, def. Philipp Kohlschreiber, Germany, 6-3, 7-6 (8), 6-1.
Nikolay Davydenko (26), Russia, def. Guillermo Canas (12), Argentina, 6-3, 6-4, 6-3.
Lleyton Hewitt (3), Australia, def. Rafael Nadal, Spain, 7-5, 3-6, 1-6, 7-6 (3), 6-2.

Women

Fourth Round

Patty Schnyder (12), Switzerland, def. Elena Dementieva (6), Russia, 6-7 (6), 7-6 (4), 6-2.
Lindsay Davenport (1), United States, def. Karolina Sprem (13), Croatia, 6-2, 6-2.
Nathalie Dechy (13), France, def. Anastasia Myskina (3), Russia, 6-4, 6-2.
Alicia Molik (10), Australia, def. Venus Williams (8), United States, 7-5, 7-6 (3).

Doubles

Third Round

Michael Llodra and Fabrice Santoro (6), France, def. Wesley Moodie, South Africa, and Nenad Zimonjic, Serbia-Montenegro, 6-3, 7-6 (3).

Tomas Berdych, Czech Republic, and Andre Pavel, Romania, def. Ashley Fisher, Australia, and Travis Parrott, United States, 6-7 (7), 6-4, 6-3.

Jones Bjorkman, Sweden, and Mats Mirnyi (4), Belarus, def. Simon Aspelin, Sweden, and Todd Perry (16), Australia, 6-2, 4-6, 7-6 (5).

Women

Third Round

Anabel Medina Garrigues, Spain, and Dinara Safina, Russia, def. Chang Chiu-jung, Taiwan, and Rika Fujiwara, Japan, 6-2, 6-3.

Gabriela Sabatini and Michaela Pastikova, Czech Republic, def. Jung Eun, Taiwan, and Peng Shuai, China, 6-2, 4-6, 6-1.

Eleni Daniilidou, Greece, and Nicole Pratt (16), Australia, def. Marion Bartoli, France, and Anna-Lena Groenefeld, Germany, 6-3, 2-6, 6-4.

Mixed

Second Round

Wayne and Cara Black (2), Zimbabwe, def. Rick Leach, United States, and Virginia Ruano Pascual, Spain, 5-7, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (8).

NHL talks to resume in bid to save season

BY IRA PODELL
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The NHL and the players' association will resume talks this week in a bid to save the season and they'll meet yet again without commissioner Gary Bettman or union head Bob Goodenow.

"The league contacted our office to arrange for continued small-group discussions. We agreed to this request," players' association senior director Ted Sackin said Monday.

The sides met twice last week without Bettman and Goodenow. Those meetings, over two days in Chicago and Toronto, were initiated by Vancouver Canucks center Trevor Linden, the NHLPA president.

Linden, Sackin and outside counsel John McCambridge represented the players. NHL chief legal officer Bill Daly, Calgary

The lockout

A look at the NHL lockout through Sunday, Jan. 23.

TOTAL DAYS OF LOCKOUT: 130.
TOTAL DAYS OF SEASON MISSED: 103.

GAMES LOST SUNDAY, 4:
TOTAL GAMES MISSED: 692 regular-season games plus the 2005 All-Star Game.

— The Associated Press

Flames part-owner Harley Hotchkiss, and outside counsel Bob Batteman took part for the league.

The sides had hoped to sit down in secretary. But word got out Monday that, just like

last week, the same representatives will meet in Toronto on Wednesday.

"We both believe that the process now will be better served by a less-public approach to the negotiation," Daly said in an e-mail statement.

The lockout reached its 131st day on Monday and has already forced the cancellation of 699 of 1,230 regular-season games, plus the All-Star Game.

No proposals have been made since early December, when the players offered a 24 percent rollback on all existing contracts as part of a luxury-tax and revenue-sharing system. The NHL turned that down and made a counterproposal five days later that was quickly rejected.

If the season is wiped out, the Stanley Cup wouldn't be awarded for the first time since 1919, when a flu epidemic canceled

the final series between Seattle and Montreal. The NHL would then become the first major North American sports league to lose an entire season because of a labor dispute.

Optimism was expressed last Wednesday after the first day of meetings when Linden and Hotchkiss talked one-on-one.

The good feeling didn't carry over to the next day, though, and Linden reportedly told players in a recorded meeting that the players' Web site that the NHL was still insisting on a salary cap and that the season would likely be canceled.

Daly said he was surprised that Linden came away from the meetings with an opinion because the NHL felt that some progress was made. But both sides admitted that there were still strong differences.

The NHL wants the new deal to give clubs cost certainty — a link between revenues and player costs. The union says that amounts to an unacceptable salary cap.

Maiers edges Rahlves in World Cup super-G

The Associated Press

KITZBUHEL, Austria — Hermann Maiers of Austria won a super giant slalom Monday for his first World Cup victory this season, and Daron Rahlves of the United States was a close second despite a bruising, somersaulting spill two weeks ago.

World Cup overall leader Bode Miller shared fifth place Sunday. Austria's Benjamin Raich, Miller's main challenger for the overall crown, was seventh. With the victory, Maiers replaced Miller atop the super-G standings.

"I just skied badly," Miller said. "It was horrible execution."

Maiers won by 0.02 seconds, racing down the Streif course in 1 minute, 22.39 seconds and averaging a loss to Rahlves. The American had won by 0.03 seconds a year ago to hand Maiers his first super-G defeat on the famed slope.

"It's always great to win here on the Austrian mountain," said Maiers, who skied in a circle after his race and pointed his right index finger to signal he was No. 1 again. "I knew Daron was one of the favorites. Coming back after two weeks off after he hurt himself, I knew he would be very motivated."

Maiers's Fritz Strobl was third in 1:22.93, and Switzerland's Didier Defago was fourth in 1:23.02. Miller and Norway's Aksel Lund Svindal followed in 1:23.06.

Rahlves has 10 World Cup victories and finished fifth in his year's overall standings. He arrived in Kitzbuehl still in pain from the giant slalom crash in Adelboden and was unsure whether to race.

Maiers has four super-G wins at the venue, including a stung comeback victory just five races after returning from a motorcycle accident in which he nearly lost his leg. He also won the downhill on the slope in 2001. He skipped the Luecherhorn downhill in Wengen, Switzerland, last week.

Miller, watching Raich slowly take his overall lead, earned nine points more than the Austrian on Monday. Miller is first with 1,093 points, 175 ahead of Raich.

One-third of World Cup tickets will be available to public

FRANKFURT, Germany — Only about one-third of the seats for the 2006 World Cup will be available to the public.

The seating capacity for the 64 games is 3.57 million, but about 440,000 tickets are reserved for honorary guests and media.

Organizers said Monday about 2.93 million tickets would be available for sale. But this would be reduced by the needs of sponsors, 205 soccer federations that are members of soccer's world governing body and others.

The actual number of tickets available to the public will be limited to about 1.1 million.

The first phase of sales, which begins Feb. 1 and mostly online, will offer 812,000 tickets. Each person will be able to order a maximum of 28 tickets — up to four for seven games.

The first phase ends March 31. Tickets will be distributed through a lottery system. More selling phases will follow — Dec. 1, 2005 to Jan. 15, 2006, Feb. 1, 2006 to April 15, 2006 and May 1, 2006 to July 9, 2006.

Tickets range from \$46 to \$784.

Salzburg is Austria's candidate for 2014 Winter Games

SALZBURG, Austria — Salzburg was chosen over Innsbruck on Monday as Austria's candidate for the 2014 Winter Olympics.

After failing in a bid for the 2010 Games, Salzburg was picked for a second time by Austria's national Olympic committee.

Salzburg was a finalist for the 2010 Olympics, but finished a distant third — behind the winner, Vancouver, British Columbia, and Pyeongchang, South Korea.

South Korea has announced that Pyeongchang will try again for 2014, while Sweden plans to enter a joint bid by Ostersund and Åre, Sofia, Bulgaria, and Munich, Germany, are other possible bidders.

The deadline to submit bids is



Daron Rahlves celebrates after crossing the finish line of the World Cup super-G race in Kitzbuehl, Austria, on Monday.

July 28, 2005. The International Olympic Committee will select the finalists in June 2006 and choose the host city in July 2007. The next Winter Olympics are in Turin, Italy in 2006.

Lennox Lewis denies reports of comeback

LONDON — Former world heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis denied a published report that said he'll end his retirement to fight Vitali Klitschko in November.

The London tabloid the Sunday Mirror quoted Lewis as saying, "I'm making a comeback later this year."

But later Sunday, Lewis released a statement saying he was not making a comeback.

"I want to reiterate what I said when I retired in February 2004 that I was fortunate to leave the sport on my own terms and that I will be one of the few heavyweight champions in history to retire on top and stay retired," he said.

Lewis, 39, retired Feb. 6 with a 41-2 record. Klitschko assumed the title April 24 when he beat Corrie Sanders.

Lewis and Klitschko last fought in June 2003. Lewis was knocked out on points when the fight was stopped in the sixth round because Klitschko was cut.

That was Lewis' last fight and he was booed out of the ring after a poor performance. The WBC mandated a rematch, but Lewis retired instead.

Delgado continues to field Mets' offers

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The New York Mets and Carlos Delgado resumed talks Monday, a day after the free-agent first baseman left the team's deadline for a deal pass.

The Texas Rangers withdrew their offer Sunday, and Delgado's agent, David Sloane, said.

Mets pulled out, too, although the team's agent said it was awaiting a response.

Sloane and the Mets talked again Monday, two people with knowledge of the talks said on the condition of anonymity.

Florida and Baltimore also were trying to sign Delgado.

While the field of Delgado narrowed, former Mets captain John Franco made his decision, agreeing Sunday to a \$700,000, one-year contract with the Houston Astros. And the Yankees added a backup infielder, agreeing to a \$600,000, one-year contract with Rey Sanchez, a deal subject to his passing a physical and finalization of contract language.

On Sunday night, after a conversation among Sloane, Mets Chief Operating Officer Jeff Wilpon and General Manager Omar Minaya, New York was unsure where it stood.

With the Rangers, where Delgado would play became an issue Sunday.

"From the first conversation with the Texas Rangers, we made it crystal clear that Carlos Delgado did not have an interest in being a full-time DH," Sloane said. "If we had 25 conversations with the Texas Rangers, we were told in 24 of those that the question of whether playing first base was no issue. Earlier today, we were told that is changing and that 75 percent of his at-bats, should he choose to sign with the Texas Rangers, would come as a DH."

"After three months of negotiations, we were given less than five hours to tell them yes or no, to

make a decision that affects not only the rest of Carlos Delgado's baseball career, but the rest of his life."

Rangers owner Tom Hicks met with Delgado in Puerto Rico and offered a \$48 million, four-year contract.

"Over the last few days, Tom Hicks and the organization reached out and made a very strong offer to Carlos Delgado," Texas General Manager John Hart said. "We had a great meeting with Carlos on Friday where we exceeded the limits of our initial proposal. As of this evening, however, we could not get a commitment from him, so we are withdrawing from discussions with him."

"He is a quality individual, but we want to continue to be committed with our young players and development plan. We have a first baseman in Mark Teixeira and other young players that we do not want to disrupt with potential position changes. Tom Hicks is not, and was not, afraid to spend money to add players like Carlos to our club."

Delgado, 36, has a 14-year-old left-handed, spent his first six seasons with the Cincinnati Reds and the last 15 with his hometown Mets.

Sanchez, 37, also was with the Yankees in the final weeks of the 1997 season, hitting .312 with 10 homers and 15 RBIs in 38 games.

Westbrook, Indians reach deal

CLEVELAND — Jake Westbrook, second on the starter list before emerging as Cleveland's best pitcher after last season, agreed to a two-year contract with the Indians on Monday and avoided salary arbitration.

Westbrook, who made \$11 million in 2004, asked for \$3.7 million in arbitration and was offered \$2.5 million by the club. His agreement with the Indians includes a team option for 2007.

Westbrook went 14-9 with a 3.38 ERA in 30 starts and was selected an AL All-Star in his first full season in the big leagues.

Woods ends drought, wins Buick

By DOUG FERGUSON
The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Tiger Woods won't get any style points for winning the Buick Invitational.

Usually an intimidating presence on the back nine, he was the guy having to scramble to make pars just to keep pace with Tom Lehman. Woods had two chances to remove all the suspense at Torrey Pines, and he responded by missing a 6-foot birdie putt at No. 17, and whiffing on a 2-iron approach to the 18th.

Golf roundup

All that mattered in the fading sunlight Sunday was putting his hands on the trophy.

"A great win," Woods said after a 4-under 68 on the South course at Torrey Pines, giving him a three-shot victory over Lehman, Luke Donald and hard-luck Charles Howell III. "It was a battle out there."

The only thing that looked vaguely familiar was Woods smiling wide on the 18th green, hugging his caddie and posing with an oversized check — \$864,000 that put him atop the PGA Tour money list.

Everything else was as bizarre as the fog that seeped quickly across Torrey Pines and reduced visibility so much that the Buick Invitational needed to have its first Monday finish in the 53-year history.

How strange was it? Woods figured he would need a 32 on the back nine to win. He shot 35 and won by three.

He hit a shot so badly that it actually turned out to be good.

With a one-shot lead on the par-5 18th and Lehman already having laid up, Woods tried to hit a 2-iron from 240 yards over the pond to the right side of the green.

"I absolutely whiffed it," Woods said.

Lucky him. He fanned it so much to the right that it found a narrow strip of fairway just right of the pond. Lehman needed a birdie to have any chance of a playoff, but instead hit his sand wedge short. He was lucky it hung up on the hill instead of going into the water.

Woods then played a pitch above the hole, hoping it would spin back down toward the cup. It



Tiger Woods celebrates as he birdies the 18th hole to win the Buick Invitational, his first stroke-play title on the PGA Tour since 2003.

didn't, leaving him a slippery 18-footer. He wanted to die the ball into the cup, but rapped it too hard. But the putt was on the right line, and it dove into the cup for a birdie that ended an odd tournament.

Lehman summed it up best. "He whipped the field playing lousy," Lehman said. "I give him a lot of credit."

Woods finished at 16-under 272, his first come-from-behind victory in the final round since the 2001 NEC Invitational, and his first stroke-play title on the PGA Tour since the 2003 American Express Championship. His only victory last year was the Match Play Championship.

Even so, Woods needed some help.

First to his defense were those crazy golfing gods, who conspired against Howell. He was at 14 under when his sand wedge from 95 yards into the 18th green was perfect.

Too perfect, it turns out.

The ball landed in the bottom of the cup, ricocheted out and went into the pond, turning an eagle into a bogey. Howell took off his cap and stared in disbelief.

"I knew I hit the shot perfect," Howell said after his 72. "And then to hit the hole and go into the water, I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Obviously, it's a crazy game."

Donald was a model of consistency, giving himself a birdie putt on every hole through No. 13 and building a one-shot lead. He had control of the tournament until two bad swings. The first one was a 6-iron that went over the 14th green and into a hazard, leading to a double bogey. Then he pulled his tee shot on No. 17 into the bushes and had to scramble for a bogey, leaving him at 73 and three shots behind.

The final gift came from Lehman.

He was trying to become the

first active Ryder Cup captain since Jack Nicklaus (1986 Masters) to win on tour. He played 32 holes on Sunday, and had no complaints about the first 30.

But from the middle of the 17th fairway, with an 8-iron in his hand and tied for Woods at 15 under, he caught a plugged lie in the bunker. His shot hit the flag, but that only showed it enough to leave him a 12-footer, and Lehman missed. Then he botched the sand wedge on No. 18, running his record to 0-7 with at least a share of the 54-hole lead, dating to the 1996 Tour Championship.

"I'm ticked I didn't win," Lehman said after his 73.

Even Woods realized in victory that it's a crazy game. "I hit it great at Mercedes and lost. I didn't hit it good here and won," Woods said. "It comes down to making putting. I hit it close enough this time. I had some opportunities to make putts, and I did."

Quigley beats Watson in playoff

KAUPULEHU-KONA, Hawaii — Dana Quigley made a 3-foot par putt on the third playoff hole and beat a faltering Tom Watson on Sunday to win the season-opening MasterCard Championship for the second time in three years.

Watson, who led after the first two rounds, made a bogey after he hit into the lava behind the 17th green at Hualalai Golf Club.

Quigley, who also missed the green on the 18th, putted past the hole and made the comeback attempt. He closed with a 6-under 66, but his three-putt from the fringe on the final hole of regulation allowed Watson to move into a tie at 18-under 198.

Watson started the round with a three-shot lead, but missed two 4-foot putts for par on the back nine for his only two bogeys in regulation, closing with a 2-under 70.

Beginning the day four behind Watson, the 57-year-old Quigley took the lead with a birdie at the par-5 14th hole while Watson made his second bogey of the week at the 13th, failing to get up-and-down from just off the green.

Watson birdied the following hole, but Quigley answered with a birdie from 6 inches at the 15th to regain his one-stroke advantage. That held up until he faltered at No. 18.

Illini nearly unanimous No. 1 in poll

By JIM O'CONNELL
The Associated Press

Illinois' eighth consecutive week as the No. 1 team in The Associated Press' college basketball poll was its first without Kansas as No. 2.

The Illini (19-0) received all but one of the 72 first-place votes from the national media panel Monday. Duke (15-0) received the only other No. 1 nod and moved up two spots to second, replacing Kansas (14-1), which dropped to sixth following its 83-62 loss at Villanova on Saturday.

Utah (16-3) was the lone newcomer to the poll this week, moving in at No. 25 and replacing Marquette, which lost two games last week.

Illinois, which beat Iowa at home in overtime in its only game last week, will play at No. 18 Wisconsin on Tuesday night. The Badgers (13-3) have the nation's longest home winning streak at 38 games. That is one of six games involving two ranked teams this week.

The last unanimous No. 1 team was Duke, which did it nine times in a 10-week span in 2001-02. The Blue Devils are now one spot from reaching No. 1 for an eighth straight season. That would be four behind UCLA's record that started in 1963-64.

Duke received 1,704 points, 95 behind Illinois and 130 more than North Carolina, which jumped from sixth to third.

Syracuse moved from seventh to fourth on the strength of a win at Wake Forest, which tied two places following its overtime loss at Florida State.

Kansas was the No. 1 in the pre-season poll and the first Top 25 of the regular season, then was No. 2 for nine straight weeks.

Kentucky was seventh, while Boston College (16-0), the only other unbeaten in Division I behind Illinois and Duke, was eighth, up one place from last week's No. 17. Oklahoma State, which lost at Texas early last week, dropped four spots to No. 9. Washington was 10th in the second straight week, the Huskies' first appearance in the Top Ten since December 1994.

The biggest drop was Georgia Tech falling from 12th to No. 22.

The Yellow Jackets (11-5) lost 70-69 at home to Virginia Tech in its only game last week, their third straight loss.

E.J. King teams starting to look like Far East contenders

Stars and Stripes

Those who still view this basketball season as a rebuilding year for the E.J. King Cobras likely haven't heard what happened this past weekend.

Led by Erika Alexander and Dracone Johnson, the Co-bras boys and girls basketball teams went unbeaten to capture invitational tournaments titles on Saturday.

The boys went 4-0 and beat St. Maure International of Yokohama 87-82 in the final of the Osaka International Invitational.

The girls team swept all five of its games, whipping Osaka International 71-48 to win a tournament co-hosted by the Brothers International and Canadian Academy of Kobe.

The girls squad finished 4-21 last year, but under new coach Bridget Vertin has gone 12-6 so far this season and is talking as if it's a contender for the Far East Class A Tournament title the Cobras last won in 1997.

"I believe we truly have a shot at winning Far East this year," said co-captain Yudia Johnson.

While tempering her predictions, Vertin said she believes the team is on the right track, as shown by the Kobe tournament championship.

"Hopefully, this tournament will set the tone for the remainder of the season," Vertin said of a team led by Alexander, who averaged 23.8 points in five games, and bolstered by strong play from Johnson and Porshia Bryant.

"The girls have gained much confidence," said Vertin,

whose Cobras will vie for the Class A crown next month in Pusan, South Korea. "We continue to be team-first focused this year and the girls demonstrated this over the past weekend."

E.J. King's boys enjoyed a more successful season last year than the girls, going 21-13 and just missing in the Class A final at Osan Air Base, South Korea.

The Cobras started last year with Daren Schuettepeltz, their fourth coach in four seasons, who inherited a young squad after a team lost in the state semifinals to Abrams Stephens and Chris Years to graduation. But the Cobras merely picked up where they left off.

"The team played well with mostly freshmen," Schuettepeltz said after Johnson, last year's Class A co-MVP, averaged 24.2 points in four games, including 35 in the championship game against St. Maure.

Brady leads Pats to third AFC title in four seasons

BY ALAN ROBINSON

The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — The New England Patriots turned Big Ben into Gentle Ben, and transformed the NFL's best-record team into another overwhelmed opponent that couldn't match the way they made, the intensity they brought or the leadership they possess.

The Pittsburgh Steelers and their 15-game winning streak weren't nearly good enough to beat the Patriots with the AFC championship on the line, not even in the stadium where New England was overwhelmed 2½ months before.

The Patriots' 41-27 rout Sunday night sends them to their third Super Bowl in four seasons — this time, against the Philadelphia Eagles on Feb. 6 in Jacksonville — and was just another in an ever-growing series of playoff performances that could soon stamp them as one of the best teams ever.

Tom Brady was too precise, too determined, and too experienced for Steelers rookie quarterback Ben Roethlisberger to match.

Roethlisberger tried getting away with the same mistakes he made in a great-escape overtime win over the New York Jets the week before, but he couldn't do it.

Not against this team, this quarterback, this coach, not even during this improbable Steelers season that saw them end the Patriots' streak 21-game streak 34-20 on Oct. 31. That performance has driven New England ever since.

It certainly motivated coach Bill Belichick, who blistered his team after what he felt was a poor practice last Wednesday.

Patriots 41, Steelers 27

New England 19 14 7 11-51
Pittsburgh 9 6 14 7-29
NE—FG Vinatieri 48, 11:20.
NE—Branch 60 pass from Brady (Vinatieri kick), 5:46.
Pit—FG Reed 43, 1:22.

Second Quarter
NE—Givens 9 pass from Brady (Vinatieri kick), 7:08.
NE—Harrison 87 interception return (Vinatieri kick), 2:11.

Third Quarter
Pit—Bettis 5 run (Reed kick), 10:54.
NE—Dillon 25 run (Vinatieri kick), 7:27.
Pit—Ward 30 pass from Roethlisberger (Reed kick), 5:52.

Fourth Quarter
Pit—FG Reed 20, 13:26.
NE—FG Vinatieri 31, 8:03.
NE—Branch 23 run (Vinatieri kick), 2:28.
Pit—Burrell 7 pass from Roethlisberger (Reed kick), 5:52.

A—65-42.
First downs 32-38
Total Net Yards 373-389
Rushes-yards 33-126; 37-103
Passes-yards 25-163; 25-186
Punt Returns 3-49; 3-49
Kickoff Returns 3-59; 3-49
Interceptions Ret. 1-19; 1-19
Comp. Atts. 14-21; 14-21
Sacked-Yards Lost 4-40; 3-40
Fumbles-Lost 1-0; 2-0
Penalties-Yards 1-5; 2-20
Time of Possession 31:21; 31:21

Individual Statistics
Rushing—New England, Dillon 24-73; Branch 2-16; Faulk 2-20; Brady 2-0.
Passing—New England, Brady 24-326; Pittsburgh, Roethlisberger 24-243-220.

Receiving—New England, Givens 5-90; Branch 4-116; Brown 1-11; Faulk 1-14; Pate 1-14; Dillon 1-5; Carpenter 1-5.
Pittsburgh, Ward 5-109; Randle 1-5; Burrell 1-37; Hayes 1-14; Tuman 1-4.

Blocked field goals—None.
Missed field goals—None.

"He let us know it," Brady said. "You would have thought we were 0-and-16 the way he spoke to us. It gets everyone in the right frame of mind. He's got great perspective, and is a tremendous coach."

Belichick's 9-1 playoff record ties Vince Lombardi as the best in NFL playoff history and validates his quarterback's praise.
Brady's 8-0 postseason record

is even better, and he showed why he might soon be this generation's Bradshaw or Montana.

While Roethlisberger threw three interceptions, Brady tossed two scoring passes and no interceptions during a nearly flawless night.

One week it's Peyton Manning, the next it's Big Ben. No matter the opposing quarterback, or the challenge, Brady always seems to have an answer.

"He is a great leader. He is everything that defines what a leader is," offensive lineman Matt Light said of Brady. "He motivates this team and he motivates everybody."

The Steelers came out as cold as the 11-degree weather by turning the ball over on a Roethlisberger-thrown interception and Jerome Bettis' fumble on their first two possessions. Predictably, the Patriots surged to a 10-0 lead on Brady's 60-yard scoring pass to Deion Branch and Adam Vinatieri's 48-yard field goal, which tied as the longest at Heinz Field.

Branch later set up Brady's 9-yard TD pass to David Givens with a 45-yard catch, and he also had a 23-yard TD run. Roethlisberger also was intercepted for a touchdown for a second consecutive game, by Rodney Harrison for 87 yards to make it 24-1 late in the first half.

Sound familiar? During the Halloween game, the Steelers had several turnovers, surged into a 24-3 lead and kept the Patriots from running the ball by building an overwhelming lead.

We demand a lot from our players," Belichick said. "I'm happy they have this kind of achievement to show for it."

All the Steelers have to show for the greatest regular season (15-1)



Patriots quarterback Tom Brady looks to hand off the ball in the first quarter of the AFC championship game against the Steelers on Sunday.

in the franchise's 73-season history is their fourth loss in five AFC title games under coach Bill Cowher since the 1994 season.

It also was the second AFC championship game loss to New England at home in four seasons. This probably hurt the worst of all because their season had been so magical, from Roethlisberger's unexpected emergence to Bettis' remarkable comeback season to their consecutive midseason victories over the previously unbeaten Patriots and Eagles.

Now, those teams will play for the Super Bowl trophy that has eluded the Steelers since they

won the last of their four NFL titles in six seasons from 1974-79. The Steelers had a chance to cut it to 31-24 early in the fourth quarter after driving to a first down at the 5, only to be turned aside on three consecutive plays. Then, Cowher effectively halted their momentum by going for Jeff Reed's 20-yard field goal rather than the touchdown, and Pittsburgh was never in again.

"I don't think that decided the game by any stretch of the imagination," said Bettis, who ran for 64 yards while being held below 100 yards for the first time in eight starts. "We just couldn't do anything after that."

Super: Eagles clear one hurdle; tougher test awaits

SUPER, FROM BACK PAGE

Owens and easily beat Minnesota and Atlanta in its two playoff games. That finally got the Eagles past the conference championship game they lost for three straight seasons and sent them on to Jacksonville, a relief perhaps more for their hypercritical and terminally insecure fans than for the players.

The Eagles are certainly worthy — getting to a championship game four straight years is an accomplishment, even if you lose the first three.

In Donovan McNabb, Philadelphia has a quarterback who has been in the running for the NFL's MVP award every year since 2000 but this one. And that was only because Peyton Manning broke Dan Marino's record for touchdown passes in a season and was nearly a unanimous choice.

In coach Andy Reid and his staff, especially coordinators Jim Johnson (defense) and Brad Chil-



WR Deion Branch exemplifies the Patriots' team-first philosophy.

dress (offense) they have a trio that compares favorably with Belichick and his chief lieutenants: Romeo Crennel and Charlie Weis.

So they have some reason to be optimistic.

But the Patriots demonstrated

in beating a Pittsburgh team, that had won 15 straight, that they are special, most notably because they are a team in the truest sense.

"Nobody cares about individual stats, just about winning, including our quarterback," said Adam Vinatieri, who stays in the background until — as he has done twice — he kicks the winning field goal as time is expiring in the Super Bowl.

So while that quarterback, Tom Brady, has become a major star and Vinatieri, Richard Seymour, Corey Dillon, Tedy Bruschi, Rodney Harrison and Willie McGinest are lesser luminaries, there is always someone with little name recognition making a big play. Brady and Harrison made them Sunday, Harrison's an 87-yard interception return in the second quarter that gave New England a 24-3 lead at intermission.

But there were others, too, like Deion Branch, who caught a 60-yard touchdown pass and ran

23 yards for another score. And Jarvis Green, who filled in so well that no one noticed that Seymour, a Pro Bowler in three of his four seasons, was out again with a knee injury, and Roosevelt Colvin, a major free-agent acquisition relegated to spot duty after missing most of last season with a hip injury, and Eugene Wilson, a second-year safety who had two interceptions.

The Patriots coaches, in fact, are bigger names than their players: Belichick tied Vince Lombardi on Sunday for the best winning percentage in playoff history (.900); Weis has already been hired as head coach at Notre Dame, and Crennel will almost surely be hired as Cleveland's head coach after the Super Bowl.

Wilson suggested after Sunday's win that maybe some of his teammates should get more individual recognition.

"I think we've got a lot of players that are overlooked because people think of us as such a

team," he said, naming Harrison, Bruschi and Brady.

That's borne out by the Pro Bowl selections Philadelphia has nine, led by McNabb and Owens. New England has four: Brady, Seymour, Vinatieri and special teamer Larry Ezzo.

But the betting people clearly thinks otherwise.

In fact, the line probably wouldn't be much different if Owens were healthy. The Eagles' star receiver strutted on the sideline and postured for the television cameras during Sunday's game, and Reid said afterward that he could be ready for the Super Bowl.

Belichick? He actually acknowledged that his team had played well, something he does rarely.

"There's a lot of blood and sweat that's put out there and I'm happy that they have this kind of achievement to show for it," he said. "I've never been around a harder working bunch. They're a special group of guys."

They'll probably be even more special in a couple of weeks.

Fiat, Philly getting shot at Super Bowl

By PAUL NEWBERRY

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Fireworks soared above the roof of "The Linc." A blizzard of glitter swirled in the bitterly cold breeze.

Fans toasted their team and each other with beers and hugs.

It was a Super-sized celebration four years in the making. And quite a relief, too.

Yo, Philly, how's this sound? Your Eagles are going to the Super Bowl.

Donovan McNabb & Co. overcame the burden of three straight losses in the NFC championship game and warmed a Philly fan's heart, stuffing Michael Vick and the Atlanta Falcons 27-10 on Sunday.

McNabb isn't satisfied yet. "There's no relief for me," he said. "We'll have relief after the Super Bowl. We set a goal of winning the Super Bowl, not just the NFC. So that's where I'm going. We're excited, but we're not done."

The Eagles already have soothed a city's fractious psyche, burying the disappointment of the last three years and pulling within one victory of Philly's first major pro championship since the 76ers won the NBA title in 1983.

Twenty-four years ago, the Eagles lost to the NFC title game, and, until Sunday, only the Super Bowl with a team coached by Dick Vermeil and led by Ron Jaworski.

They fell flat in the title game, losing to the Raiders 27-10.

That score went the Eagles' way this time. They will meet New England in Jacksonville, Fla., on Feb. 6 for the NFL championship.

"We want to go to Jacksonville and get some closure and finish this up," receiver Freddie Mitchell said.

The fourth consecutive appearance in the NFC title game proved to be the charm for the Eagles, even though they didn't have top receiver Terrell Owens — reduced to the role of MVC (Most



Philadelphia Eagles defender Brian Dawkins (20) reacts after a third quarter interception of Atlanta Falcons quarterback Michael Vick. With Dawkins are teammates Dhan Jones (55) and Lito Sheppard (26).

Valuable Cheerleader) on the sideline.

Nothing was going to stand in the way of this team, which entered the season with a Super Bowl or Bust mentality and met those enormous expectations.

McNabb threw a pair of touchdown passes to Chad Lewis, including the clinching score with 3:21 remaining. That turned the final minutes into a delirious coronation, the 67,717 fans saluting a team that fulfilled its destiny.

"Super Bowl! Super Bowl!" they chanted when play was halted for the two-minute warning.

The only warm-weather team left in the playoffs went into its biggest game of the year. Vick was sacked four times by the fearless Philly defense, which also came up with a crucial interception that set up David Akers' second field goal.

The significance of the day was evident on the field — the Eagles

pranced and posed after every big play — and in the stands, where most of the fans never tired to sit down on a 17-degree day.

The Eagles will be going for their first NFL title since 1960, which predates the Super Bowl by six seasons.

McNabb completed 17 of 26 passes for 180 yards, a workmanlike performance that solidified his position as one of the game's best quarterbacks. He also ran 10 times for 32 yards.

Vick's debut on the Super Bowl stage will have to wait. He completed just 11-for-24 for 136 yards, while the Eagles stifled defense kept him from pulling off one of his signature runs.

He ran it just four times for 26 yards, but gave up even more yards on the sacks. Derrick Burgess dropped the elusive quarterback twice, and Jevon Kearse kept Vick hemmed up on the other side. The Eagles didn't blitz much — a change in philosophy

— but they made sure Vick didn't get a chance to warm up.

"I didn't get outside the pocket," Vick said. "I think that was their first priority."

Philadelphia led only 14-10 at halftime, a bit too close for a team that had lost to St. Louis, Tampa Bay and Carolina in the last three NFC title games. Even more galling — the two more recent defeats were at home.

But, as the sun gave way to a nearly full moon over Lincoln Financial Field, the Eagles dominated the final two quarters. Akers connected from 31 and 34 yards, then McNabb and Lewis teamed up to finish off the Falcons with their 2-yard touchdown.

Owens, who didn't play because of a severe ankle injury, had a prominent role nonetheless. He drew plenty of attention with his sideline antics, flipping his arms and waving a towel to urge on a crowd that didn't need any encouragement.

Eagles 27, Falcons 10

Atlanta	0	10	0	10
Philadelphia	7	7	6	7
First Quarter				
Phil—Levens 4 run (Akers kick), 4:16.				
Second Quarter				
Atl—FG Feely 23, 10:19.				
Phil—Lewis 3 pass from McNabb (Akers kick), 6:58.				
Atl—Dunn 10 run (Feely kick), 2:02.				
Third Quarter				
Phil—FG Akers 31, 8:55.				
Phil—FG Akers 34, 2:50.				
Fourth Quarter				
Phil—Lewis 2 pass from McNabb (Akers kick), 7:21.				
A—67:17.	Atl	Phil		
First downs	20	22		
Total Net Yards	202	326		
Rushes-yards	26-99	33-156		
Passing	10-170	17-270		
Punt Returns	2-20	1-14		
Kickoff Returns	5-117	5-4		
Interceptions Ret.	0-0	1-19		
Comp-Att-Int	11-24-1	18-27-0		
Sacks-Yards Lost	11-84	13-74		
Punts	5-26.0	3-38.3		
Fumbles-Lost	4-3	1-0		
Penalties-Yards	5-24	6-59		
Time of Possession	28:45	35:15		

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS	
Rushing—Atlanta, Dunn 15-50, Vick 4-26, Duckett 7-14, Philadelphia, Westbrook 16-96, McNabb 10-32, Levens 6-18, Lewis 1-10	
Passing—Atlanta, Vick 11-24-1-138, Philadelphia, McNabb 17-26-1-260, Kober 1-1-0-3	
Receiving—Atlanta, Crumpler 4-49, Price 2-37, Finerman 1-29, Jenkins 1-7, White 1-7, Tomlin 1-4, McNabb 1-3, Philadelphia, Westbrook 5-39, Lewis 4-20, Clark 2-5, Mitchell 2-30, Levens 2-2, Smith 1-21, Pinkston 1-13, Perry 1-3	
Missed field goals—None.	

And he may just recover in time for the Super Bowl.

"I have a feeling he will," Reid said.

Owens' teammates filled in admirably. McNabb worked his passes around to eight players, led by tight end Westbrook on five catches for 49 yards. Westbrook also handled the bulk of the running load, carrying 16 times for 96 yards.

—It was time for the party

"This is their fourth trip in a row to the championship game," said Jim Mora, the Falcons' rookie coach. "They've been in this position before, and they played like they've been in this position before."

It was a great season for the Falcons, who came within one win of their second Super Bowl after going 5-11 last season. With Vick at quarterback, the future looks bright.

Eagles TE Lewis out for Super Bowl; Owens uncertain

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Philadelphia Eagles tight end Chad Lewis will miss the Super Bowl with a foot injury.

Lewis, who caught two touchdown passes in Philadelphia's 27-10 victory over Atlanta in the NFC championship game Sunday, will have surgery on Wednesday. He was hurt on his second TD catch, a 2-yard catch that sealed the victory.

Meanwhile, All-Pro wide receiver Terrell Owens' status is uncertain. Owens has been sidelined with an ankle injury since Dec. 19. Eagles coach Andy Reid said Owens has made "great progress," and will try to run on the ankle this week.

Lewis' injury, called a Lis



Franc sprain, is more common in automobile accidents and equestrian sports.

Second-year pro L.J. Smith will take Lewis' spot in the starting lineup against New England in the Super Bowl on Feb. 6. Mike Bartrum, also the long snapper, is the only other tight end on the roster. Reid said the team will try to add another tight end this week. Lewis backed up Bartrum as the long snapper.

ABC: Owens was second choice in towel skit — to Madden

LOS ANGELES — ABC's first

choice for the infamous "Monday Night Football" dropped towel episode wasn't Terrell Owens — it was announcer John Madden.

For reasons that are unclear, Madden couldn't find the time to perform for the skit. Owens, the Philadelphia Eagles receiver, filled in for him in the steamy sketch that drew viewer protests and a network apology, said ABC entertainment president Stephen McPherson on Sunday.

In the spoof that preceded the football game Nov. 15, "Desperate Housewives" actress Nicole Sheridan persuaded Owens to skip the game by dropping the towel wrapped around her and jumping into his arms.

ABC initially thought it would be funny to have the, uh, less at-

tractive Madden as the subject of Sheridan's ardor, McPherson said.

The towel-dropping was another last-minute addition to the script that plainly backfired, said Marc Cherry, executive producer of "Desperate Housewives," who helped write it.

Cherry said it was all a mistake. But he and McPherson both said they were surprised at the reaction.

"I feel really bad about it," Cherry said. "I didn't want to upset people. I didn't realize that 'Monday Night Football' was such a family viewing experience. I wouldn't let my 5-year-old watch beer commercials with big-busted cheerleaders, but that's just me."

Sheridan, appearing before tele-

vision writers Sunday, said the purpose was to amuse people.

"Taking a pop culture incident like that and having it take precedence over the underlying problems of the show was absurd," Sheridan said.

Jets QB Pennington to undergo shoulder surgery
HEMPSTEAD, N.Y. — New York Jets quarterback Chad Pennington will have surgery to repair an injured rotator cuff in his right shoulder.

Pennington played the final six games of the season with the injury, which the team initially said was a strain. An MRI exam last week showed the extent of the damage, requiring surgery. The date of the procedure was not announced.

SPORTS



Wild weekend ends
with Woods victory
in Buick Invitational, Page 29

Will it be Eagles' time or a team for all-time?

Philly seeks first Super Bowl title; Pats playing for third in four years

BY DAVE GOLDBERG
The Associated Press

The Super Bowl matchup is as it should be: the best team in the AFC against the best team in the NFC. The problem for the Philadelphia Eagles is that the AFC club looks like it might be a team for the ages.

That, of course, would be the New England Patriots, who have won two of the past three NFL championships and are favored over the Eagles by 7 points, a spread that is likely to go up. Three hours after New England took apart Ben Roethlisberger and Pittsburgh 41-24 Sunday evening, enough money had come in on the Patriots that the line jumped a half point.

That is as it should be as the attention of the sporting world turns to Jacksonville for the game on Feb. 6.

Officials in north Florida already are on high security alert, rerouting traffic, beefing up Coast Guard patrols, even inspecting manholes at they prepare for the attention the Patriots and Eagles will receive.

Especially the Patriots, who are trying for their third Super Bowl victory in four years — a feat accomplished only by Dallas from 1992-95.

"Dynasty" probably isn't the right word for what they might accomplish — four years is a short dynasty.

But after Sunday's game, more than a few people were comparing Bill Belichick's Patriots to the Joe Montana/Steve Young/Jerry Rice/Ronnie Lott San Francisco teams that won five Super Bowls between 1981 and 1994. The 49ers might have had a few more had the NFC not been loaded with almost equally good Redskins, Giants, Bears and Cowboys teams during that period.

This is not to slight the Eagles, by far the best team in the NFC in a season in which that conference was as down as any has been in a long time.

They were 13-1 and dominating when Terrell Owens went out with a knee injury on Dec. 19. Philadelphia rested regulars and lost two games, but came back without



Philadelphia Eagles linebacker Jeremiah Trotter celebrates after stopping Atlanta Falcons running back Warrick Dunn for a 3-yard loss in the second quarter of the NFC championship game on Sunday. The Eagles defeated the Falcons 27-10.



New England Patriots RB Corey Dillon breaks away from Pittsburgh Steelers Chris Hope, left, and Troy Polamalu for a 25-yard TD during the third quarter of the AFC championship game.



Patriots' Eugene Wilson (26) and Tedy Bruschi celebrate after Wilson intercepted Steelers QB Ben Roethlisberger's first pass of the AFC title game. The Pats had three interceptions in the game.

SEE SUPER ON PAGE 30



**Patriots make
Roethlisberger
look like
rookie QB,
end Steelers'
15-game
winning streak**

Page 30



**After three
consecutive
misses,
Eagles get over
NFC hurdle
with victory
over Falcons**

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Venus' major drought continues in Australian

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